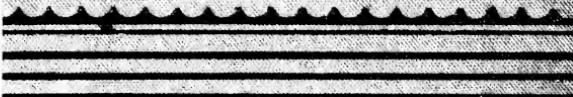


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Our Father,



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Mr. & Mrs. C. H. Miller

With Compliments to

Mrs C. H. Miller

OUR MABEL,

—OR—

Crests upon the Waves of Thought,

BY MRS. E. R. MASON.

“My son, if thou will receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee:

“So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding:

“If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures:

“Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity, yea **EVERY GOOD PATH.**”



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TO REV. TRUMAN M. POST,

The beloved Pastor of my youth, who tenderly placed his hand upon my young head, and said:

“Remember my daughter to *do* good as well as to *be* good.”

TO ALL PARENTS,

Whose feet have trodden the rugged ways of sorrow, fear, anxiety, hope and love.

TO THE DEAR YOUTH,

Whose feet are approaching the threshold of manhood and womanhood, who are eagerly waiting for coming years; whose hearts, pulsating with prescient hopes and ambitions, yet held within the pregnant future, and who have not tasted life’s “bitter sweets.”

TO ALL THESE,

Dwell where they may, is this humble effort most affectionately dedicated.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY—CHILDHOOD OF OUR MABEL.

The universal book of life; its pages turn each day and hour. Leaf by leaf is slowly opening, for the ages to discover the woven stories from the past's deep urns, with glimpses here and there of the futures onward tending.

The god of day points his finger to the stories told, and lessons learned, or all unheeded in the daily leaf he turns, and all the lesser gods of day or night their pages too must turn, and truthfully portray their passage through the flight of years.

Earth's volume is of the series too, that forms the universal book, her stories, her histories of conquests and defeats, her throbings, her sympathies and tears, her travails of birth and bitterness of death, are the epitomized stories or histories of the larger book, an abridgment, forsooth, whose perusal will take an eternity for full comprehension.

But the books multiply, until there is no end of books, of abridgments, all telling the same story, or uttering the same truths, but still new because of varied utterance, because that life is a prism, and wherever you show it, the rays of the rainbow are sure to enfold it.

When the sun opens his volume at the peeping of morn, millions of life-books are then being born, their alphabet page beginning to turn, all unconscious the volume the future shall earn.

Life-books are closing at the same hour of time, preparing their sequels for the future still, to entwine.

Myriads of life-books, are unwritten, unspoken, save only by sound of the quick telegraph tokens, with which life everywhere abounds.

They only these volumes may read, whose ears have been quickened, whose hearts breed a sympathy, whose love of life, can recognize its kindred.

Nature's library is open and free to all, she invites to a study of her books, and gives choice to the demanding soul, of the course and direction which its thought shall take. Never like parents who with a dignified ignorance, puts aside the querulous child (made so by inattention), asking why, why? does she command an acceptance of her teachings, without the whys and wherefores, but invites to all questionings, standing ready for test. Some of her children, by the inheritance she has given, can take not a step onward in life without understanding the law that controls it, while some dig deep for analogies, and others must be mathematically controlled.

Mother nature delights in them all, and in leading them each through the paths their nature compels. She hath dear children many, who like the thoughtless school-girl, careless and merry, seeks not for this

path or that in the onward of life, but flits like the humming bird from flower unto flower, heeding nor caring for the law that produced them, or that which gives power to enjoy.

These are the glimpses of some of life's books, gay, dry and sober, which shall we take then, to seek for the moral its pages contain?

Take that which seemeth most pregnant
With emotions of hope, love and fear,
And of earth's passions most regnant,
Wielding the sceptre over our sphere—

Fing'ring the lyres earth life has wrought,
Tuned to the touch of sympathies thrill,
Sob'bings and joys, and great fears, taught
Of the mission all souls must fulfil.

Thousands have read the same story from the book out of which I glean, but by virtue of the mind's constitution, probably no two have understood it alike, therefore, though in danger of repetition, there is none in holding up old truths for every shading of varied thought. So, when I introduce to you, "Our Mabel Lee," you may recognize in her an old acquaintance, so be it, but perhaps it will not be an unprofitable renewal of the same.

Not apt at sketching of faces, I can only say, that intensity of thought has produced a depth of meaning in her eyes, which cool and glow as the soul is stirred. An affectionate nature has developed a peculiar sweetness of the mouth, while yet, decision or firmness is well enough marked; forehead neither very high or

low, but finely proportioned, tall and graceful, she moves with quiet self-possession, born of the philosophy of her nature, laugh who may at this touch of the pen, it is a firm conviction.

These are fine attributes for a young life, but not so sanctifying as to prevent the ardency and gushing life of youth, yet bringing this dower to the possessor, a capacity for keen enjoyment or suffering.

Mabel was born of the fresh love of hearts as nearly mated as youthful instincts will allow, to what they might have developed, had they not been stricken by one of death's messengers of epidemic, none can know.

Thus in her early years a loved uncle folded her in his arms, and claimed her for his own. Unmarried and of moderate means, he began to speculate as to how he could best care for his niece, and cultivate what qualities of heart and mind he should discover from time to time.

He saw in Mabel an antidote for the hopeless sorrow of his own life. Years since, he had laid away in her bridal robe, a young and beautiful being, at the very moment when she was to have become his wife. His intensest of natures, buried there too all anticipated joys of earth, but loyal and true, accepted that rite as the marriage of his soul to an angel's in heaven. And thus has he dreamed by day and by night, that a wife walked and reposed by his side; he calls it no dreaming, but would willingly swear on record most holy, that this angelic wife, sits often

anear him, clasping his hands, or his brow gently chafing, and more, that when pillowed at night, a soft breath on his cheek, and an impress as sure as of mortal, with a whispered "Oh darling, good night," attests to the fact, his angel is with him.

Why "Our Mabel" should always be applied to the child of his adoption, the stranger knew not. On his course he decided at length, on the principle, that souls are precious, and mind indestructible, that time is fleeting, and gold not wingless, and that as he could afford a moderate home with full comfort for the child, and attractive to his angel wife, he would cease further efforts to accumulate wealth.

Thus would he give his time and means to watching the growth of this bud to the full blossom. As he begins to realize the value of his life work, let us take a backward glance at the method he adopted. To gain the child's perfect confidence, as well as her love, he felt he must become her companion in all that interested and employed her, so not only did he walk, plant and trim the little garden, read and study with her, but he was her earlier companion in the miniature housekeepings, and in the training of the whole family of dolls. And there was never a more beautiful picture, than the two with heads bent together over the baby house, or block building, one full of the ideas and questionings that innocence will ever ask and express, the other carefully noting the budding of thought.

The village of Homer though not the smallest, was

none of the largest in number of inhabitants, yet perhaps in point of extent, as large as any, from the fact that some of its earlier settlers, loved nature in her rural garb so well, that the trees and abundance of flowers found place twixt cottage homes.

Its nucleus consisted of the usual tavern, blacksmith's shop and various stores. Whatever of life or activity it possessed was due to a branch railroad passing within its limits.

Strangers noticing the regularity and shadiness of the streets, the gardens allotted to every house, at once would recognize a master spirit of philanthropic mold. Should the villagers be questioned in regard thereto, the oldest of them would quickly point to Mr. Tremaine's cottage, and say, "there dwells the "man sir, who laid out this town and had a hand in "building most of its cottages. Many a load has "he lightened for our people sir, and many a one has "he helped to a home, who else would never have had "one, and we know that it has been money out of "his pocket, instead of in, that to-day he is not the "rich man he might have been, unless the love of our "people balances the scales."

"Not heard his story sir? well it is little any of us "know, but it is said by them as do pretend to know, "that he had a great sorrow when a young man, that "would have killed him, only that he believes that an "angel comes to him sometimes and tells him not to "mourn, but to grow strong and good, by doing all

“he can for other’s lives; that that is his mission, and “some day he shall be rewarded by going to live in “heaven with the young lady (as people say it was) “that he lost.”

“People said he was crazy in that (although he “always seemed to be in his right mind about other “things), and that he would get over it some day, but “he don’t get over it, and “Our Mabel,” that’s his “adopted daughter talks just the same, and to tell you “the truth though I don’t understand it, I’ve come to “think there isn’t much craziness about it after all.”

Thus much of interest clustered around the good man’s dwelling, and followed all his actions. He, conscious always of the high mark that destiny had pointed out for him, moved on in his course, heedless of the world’s approval, though not despising it, so that he was able to live true to the soul within him.

We will not attempt to describe him further, but let that portion of his life-book, at which we shall glance, tell its own story.

Opening then to the page where “Our Mabel” is just crossing the stream from girlhood to womanhood, which we find in the record is just on to sixteen, we will read from her life-book, which for a time is written and noted beneath the dear uncle’s eye, each bringing food the other’s volume to swell.

Mr. Tremaire’s cottage though substantial and plain, was yet adorned to the utmost with nature’s choicest vines and flowers. Surrounded by fine old trees, the grassy floor beneath, studded with rustic

seats, a subtle invitation breathed out to the weary, or to strangers, to rest and be shaded.

Who shall say that the thought and love of the master was not caught by the tree, vine and flower, distilled and evaporated through perfume, nodding and shade. Within, the same air of welcome pervaded the house, making cheery every nook and corner. A broad piazza extended across its front, entering, a generous hall carpeted and hung with pictures greeted the eye, producing most pleasurable sensations. A door to the left opened into a cozy parlor, and back of this opening into it was the noted parlor chamber for the occasional guest. To the right of the hall, you enter what Mr. Tremaine called their morning room, or study, the cheeriest and most inviting of the whole house, back of which, and corresponding to the parlor chamber, was Mabel's own. At the rear of the hall came the dining room, which in its turn had opening from out of it, the tiny chamber, claimed by Mr. Tremaine, and the cozy little kitchen. The latter was not without its queen, though of dusky hue, whose good natured face and motherly ways, caused all to acknowledge her right to the sway therein.

“Auntie Bet” was a happy old soul, though indeed, one would say she had good reason to be for she had what few of her color in those days possessed, a home of her own down at the back of the lot, which her kind employer had built and given to her; consisting of a bedroom and parlor, or sitting room, parlor she

called it, tiny of course, but full of comfort to the genuinely good woman who occupied it.

But Auntie Bet did not live alone down there, her greatest pleasure being in the consciousness that she and her "old man" could sit down before their own fireside of evenings and chat while she did her mending or knitting.

Uncle Sam though not quite so evenly tempered as his wife, would nevertheless be sadly missed were he to forsake the care of out-door matters.

CHAPTER II.

A BIRTH-DAY PARTY—PRIDE, ENVY AND HAPPINESS.

“Uncle! dear uncle!” exclaimed “Our Mabel,” as she entered the morning room and found her uncle in his accustomed place, “what do you think of this? I called just now on May and Jennie Osgood to invite them to my birthday party Thursday afternoon and evening. At first they seemed delighted, and began to ask who else was coming. I told them I intended to have all the young folks of the village. ‘What?’ they exclaimed, ‘not Jane Benson, Carrie Long and Julia Howard?’ ‘Yes, said I, why not?’ ‘Oh Mabel! what are you thinking of, they are not considered respectable, and mama would be shocked to have us associate with them. We would like to go to your party ever so much, but if you really intend to have those girls, we will have to give it up! Uncle dear, I could not help it, but I said, ‘I am sorry that you feel as you do, but for nothing in this world, would I slight the very girls you mention. I know them well, and more earnest, true hearted girls, will be hard to find. To be sure, Jane Benson works at the milliner’s for the support of herself and a feeble mother. Carrie Long does most of the work of her mother’s house, because with their large family they

cannot afford to keep a girl; and Julia Howard, dear little soul, will take in sewing whenever she can get it. I do not know what you mean by respectable, but if it is not respectable to take care of one's own self, and do as much for others as we can, then I have never understood the term aright. I added, 'perhaps you will think better of it, I hope you will,' and bade them good morning."

"Spoken like our own Mabel, to the point, and well," replied her uncle.

"But uncle," said Mabel, as with tears in her eyes she drew up the ottoman and took her favorite position at his feet, "I am so disappointed, they seem to be such nice girls, and I really wanted them to come very much. To be sure they have not been here long, and I do not know them very well, but I did not for a moment suppose, that because they live in a little finer house than others, and keep a coachman to drive for them, that they would look *down* upon our village girls."

"My dear child, I now confess that as you went out on your errand this morning, I felt what the consequences would be, and I would have saved you the unpleasant experience, but I reasoned that no fact or knowledge, is truly ours, except through its experience, that I should indeed rob you of your birth-right, were I to withhold you from a single experience that your nature is capable of grasping intelligently. You have now attained an age, when I can explain these things to you, but if you will go back and up

through your childhood to the present time, you will gradually come to see that you have been subjected to this plan all along."

"I thank the good God and His angels above, that you have grown to feel and comprehend the inner life of souls, and that you have not only the willingness, but the strength to recognize and stand up for true worth everywhere."

"But regarding your experience this morning, it is one which you will often meet as your life broadens and drifts you out upon the sea of worldly strife for place and power. In our quiet home, among our village people, but little of the world's ambition has crept among us, and we know our neighbors for just what they are, kindly, good intentioned, most of them, and as I have often striven to show you, all in reality striving after the same goal, though taking as different methods to attain it, as the varied minds with which they are endowed."

"Hitherto, I have dwelt in talking with you, more upon the motives and true intentions of men and women, striving thus to cultivate your heart's quick intuitions, and putting in the background the actions, or words hastily spoken and done, and of which, most men quickly repent, though habit and pride prevent retraction."

"As the years pass on, you will perceive why I have aimed to lay this groundwork, which I must truly say brings its hours of sorrow and pain, but also its rich reward, of souls in conscious com-

munion with souls, opening the door for the angel of charity to glide in, and clothe with her pure and white robes, many a one more sinned against, than sinning."

"Dear child you are now entering upon womanhood, and I would have you apply these lessons of your youth to the broader field of human kind, that is now opening up before you."

"I will not lecture long, but let us return to May and Jeannie and see how we can apply this principle."

"Oh, uncle! you know I love to hear you talk, or lecture if you will, for somehow I always feel stronger and bigger, as if I would not be afraid if all the world was looking on, to help some poor body, that every other one would scorn. Tell me, uncle, don't you think that when people have such feelings, that even if they have not the opportunity to do much, the feeling itself, helps to make them strong?"

"Certainly, Mabel, certainly, nothing is more true. The encouragement of any sentiment through thought or imagination, gives it strength, and often becomes a mighty power for both evil and good, mind that, both evil and good, for instance, the sentiment you have just expressed, encouraged in your thought by imaginary actions, would give you the actual moral courage to enter the veriest den to aid a suffering soul. Encourage a small beginning of dislike and jealousy in the same way, and it heats the soul it sways, hotter and hotter, until at last,

naught but the very life blood of its object, can quench or in the least assuage its passion.

“These are extreme cases, but their shadings are many, as seen and felt in the daily life of all. Oh that people would stop to consider, and analyze the principles underlying humanities outgrowth.

“But I have wandered off from May and Jennie Osgood.

“I desire to point out one thing to you, and see if our Mabel does not think there is a work for her to do in that direction.

“You say, they seem to be such nice girls. That they appeal to you as such, is your soul’s recognition of the genuine in their natures, despite the outward encrustations which now envelope them.

“The divine spark of truth is a gem often deeply imbedded in earth, but because all eyes do not behold it, or but few the hands that can grasp it, yet all the same the jewel is there, and often the soil is looser than it seems, when the hand of love attacks it, and will crumble aside to disclose the pure sparkle of worth.

“See, now, how the whole course of a life may be changed by the having or not, of a discreet, loving and tender hand to guide the growing soul in its youthful aspirations. I say aspiration, for aspiration is the native heaven born instinct of human life everywhere, and is the leader to every result.

“Parents love their children and think to manifest it in myraid ways, yet few there be who comprehend

this love's diviner instinct, which nature strives through them to hand to offspring, and thus by granting material desires alone, and by gratifying fleeting fancies, are but lulling to sleep the interior life that seeks for recognition, and which through unwise hands, meets all but death, and oftentimes proves an abortion in reality, as to this life's existence.

"Now my darling, your busy little life has proven to you there should be no place for idlers here; that God has put us on this planet for a purpose, and who that has looked deep into human hearts, can misjudge what that purpose is. You know I love to quote from one who is to me my guardian angel, and to whom I am indebted for the many trains of thought and action that has led me close to the heart of humanity to listen to its struggling pulsations. In the night time comes my sweetest visions, after the weariness of the day has worn off with the early hours of sleep. When my soul is troubled with the problems of life, the touch and breath I've learned so well to know, comes at such times, to waken, and reveal the answer solved.

"Thus at one time I labored long with and for a soul that seemed so lost to human thought or will, that no impression of any kind could apparently be made upon him, and in my despair of accomplishing aught, I almost forsook one principle instilled by my mother's care and love, that all beings high or low, rich or poor, degraded or otherwise surely have their angel side.

“Then spoke my angel watcher, ‘When upon a cold stone the water falls drop by drop, you deem no impress e'er is made, but time has proven that even a stone must yield its strength to the suppliant power of the tiny drop. To impress little children both tender and weak, is needed the precept on precept, and line upon line. How then is this, a man grown old in the work of a sexton, each day with his spade and more clods of clay burying a little deeper his birth-right of self-hood, until the flame that would sometimes leap up in a flicker, has died down into the dimmest expression of an outspent fire. The stone *can* be worn through in time by the drop of water, the tender child needs the oft repeated maxims of truth to be kept before its thought. Then despair not, work faithfully on, the seeds of truth *must* germinate, and according to its kind take time to root. You do not sow seeds in your garden over night, and expect in the morning the unfolding leaf, but it must germinate and expand in the darkness of earth, before it has strength to peep at the light. When a mortal lies in a deep opiate slumber, you know that time only can bring recognition, or sensate full life, then

Dear one, oh dear one, no mission forsake,
Let love drops still fall, drop upon drop,
And germs of sweet truth, shall follow their wake,
Ope' to the morn, and to heaven look up.

Your little friends now are but dozing, a few gentle touches will rouse them to life; indeed, even this morning's contact with unaccustomed thought, will

set the heart's blood in motion for a better circulation.

“Do not shrink from meeting with them, nor fear to express by action, or thought truly spoken, the principles you have adopted for your own living; thus am I sure that not only they but many another with whom your future shall bring you in contact, will bless you, if not in words, in their innermost being, for the strength which your example alone gives to them to express and live their truest conception and thought.

“Tears! Mabel, tears! Forgive your old uncle for moralizing so long, when you should have been out like the birds, free as air, to dress up the house in your own sweet way, for the party that now will be soon in its coming.”

“But I like to be a caged bird sometimes, and I like to have tears, when they come because I feel thankful and because I long to be good and live as I am moved to, when I hear you talk,” said Mabel.

“I will try darling uncle to remember all you tell me, and —”

“There, there now, don't pattern after that same uncle and moralize too long. I must stop such an effervescence with a kiss.”

CHAPTER III.

THE OSGOOD FAMILY.

When Mabel left the home of the Osgoods after giving her invitation, the sisters stood for a moment in silence ; then Jennie, the most impulsive of the two, exclaimed :

“ Well, May, what do you think of that ? ”

“ I dont know ; I think she is right, and I think she is wrong. Somehow, Mabel always makes me feel uneasy when I see her, as if something was all wrong, and I don’t know what.”

“ Well, it’s plain to see that she is a queer girl, with her queer notions, and I am not going to bother myself about her, and if I were you, May, I wouldn’t either. Let’s go and tell mama.”

A spring and a bound brought Jennie to the sitting room, where the mother was ensconced in her easy sewing chair, and had already began her story of Mabel’s visit before the more quiet sister had reached the same spot.

“ Be quiet, Jennie, for pity’s sake, and let me understand what you are talking about.”

“ Why, this : Mabel called just now to invite us to her party Thursday evening, and she is going to have all the girls of the village—seamstresses, milliners,

and I don't know but all the servants, too. At any rate, she might have known better than to ask us."

"How is this, May? How much exaggeration, now?"

"Well, mother, Mabel did say she intended to invite all the village girls, and when we exclaimed, 'Why, you don't mean to invite Jane Benson, Carrie Long or Julia Howard,' she said she did; that for all the world she would not slight those very girls, as she knew them well, 'and more earnest and true-hearted girls would be hard to find.'"

"Strange, that Mabel should try to carry out such an idea. I suppose many such girls are good and noble, yet we must not forget that some things are due to our station in life, and such a plan of mingling the classes would never work well—everybody has his or her place in the scale of society and should keep it. Mabel is a good girl, well born and raised, though by an eccentric uncle, and with her you might associate, but I am not willing you should meet on an equal footing those outside of our own station."

"So then, May, we don't go; that settles it. I told Mabel, mother, that you would be shocked, and that we could not go, but she only said she was sorry and hoped we would think better of it."

"What now, May? Are you then so disappointed that the tears must come?"

"No, it is not that, mother. I hardly know myself, but I can't help feeling that Mabel is right in what we call her queer notions. Always when I have been

with her I felt uneasy, and, dear mother, don't think me foolish. I feel as if I am not living just right—that I have some kind of work to do that nobody else can do for me, and I don't know what it is, only such a longing for something."

"Tut, tut, child, you will have enough to do by and by. A few years, and you will probably have all the cares a woman can want, and meantime it is your duty to improve what advantages of education and society your parents can give."

"But, mother, you do not understand me. I am sure ——"

"I understand now, May, that this morbid fancy is what has ailed you of late, moving you about the house so slowly and bringing tears to your eyes most unexpectedly. In fact, your imagination is making you sick. You must certainly put a stop to such idle fancies. Your duties now are to study well, practice well, and to spend what time you have to spare from these in out door exercise, and you will soon find these unnatural ideas will leave you. About the party, I must talk with your father before we decide; as we have lived in Homer so short a time, and Mr. Tremaine is a leading man here, your father may think it wise to accept this invitation, in which case I can certainly trust my daughters, as to whom they will associate with and who not. Mabel will not always be so foolish, and will probably change her course before a great while."

"There comes father now; let's ask him right away!"

“No, Jennie ; time enough after dinner. Go tell Harriet your father is coming and that I shall be down almost immediately.”

That meal being over, Mrs. Osgood spoke quietly to her husband, saying :

“George, come with me to the sitting room for awhile ; I want to talk with you.”

“To the sitting room, is it ? Sure. an’ ar’nt ye’s always a-talking to me ?”

“Do, George, put aside your fun for once. You ought not to be so undignified. See how the girls are growing up—almost young ladies now, and you carry on before them when the humor is on you, just as in years ago.”

“An’ it’s me fun I must be laving, from the young folks saving, lest they take to behaving !”

“George, George ! Listen, now, and be serious. I want your advice. Mr. Tremaine’s niece is to have a birth-day party and has invited our girls.”

“Well, that’s good. Let them go —”

“But what else, do you think ? Mabel has conceived the queer notion of asking some of the poorest working girls in town also, and when May and Jennie remonstrated, said she would not slight these girls for the world, and when they said they could not come then, she only said she was sorry, but hoped they might think better of it.”

“That is rather rough for us, but I’ll tell you what, wife ; it won’t do to hold our heads above Mr. Tremaine. He is a power here ; every man, woman and

child love and respect him, and as a unit would resent what they might consider an insult to him."

"I had a thought of that kind myself, and therefore told the girls I could not decide until I had consulted you. But George, where is this sort of thing going to lead us? Have you noticed May of late? She is already so much affected by Mabel's ideas and actions—which I regard as a girlish sentimentality—that she does not appear like the same child, but she house as in a dream, and often tears come to her eyes mopes about the when their cause I am at a loss to perceive."

To tell the truth, wife, I understand something of that, for Mr. Tremaine in his contact with the people, his manner towards them, together with his example and speech, have set me to thinking too, and I have become convinced that there is something well grounded in the principles of a man that will engender and retain not only the respect, but love of a community like this. I do sincerely feel that there is something grand and noble, and worth aspiring to in the life of such a man."

"Mabel has, of course, imbibed to a great extent his ideas of thought and manner; she, too, is greatly beloved for her genuine goodness and sympathy for all, and I judge if it has not lessened the esteem of others for her, or degraded her, the stooping to take the hands and cheer the hearts of many below her station in life, neither will it contaminate our daughters but do them good."

"Why! George, you astonish me. I never heard

you talk in that way before. You seem excited. Stop walking, please, and sit down by me. Now think what you have been saying. What would your father and mother of the good old family of Osgood say to hear you thus express yourself, to say nothing of my side of the house?"

"I am not excited, but in deep earnest, meaning just what I say; and as for my ancestry, all due respect being paid to them, I feel now to say, let the dead past bury its dead! For their times they were well, and whatever distinguished them was due to the individuality of each. The fortunate circumstances of birth and means was an aid thereto, but many possessed of these come into the world and out of it without a single achievement. I am proud and thankful to be a descendant of those who did accomplish something, but now I feel I shall be recreant to their blood if in my turn, in an age of Republicanism, I do not work out my own individuality."

"Well, dear, I cannot understand this change in your views, nor can I bring myself to a belief that you are right, and I wonder if you consider how much of trouble and opposition such a course will plunge us into."

"Of course you cannot *believe* until you know, but after a while you will come to know that I am right by giving a little thought and attention to the subject, and then it is my wifey that will not care for 'Mrs. Grundy' at large, or in the shape of any descendant of never so ancient a family. I have been trying

for a month or more to express these views to you, but I could not get about it, somehow it seemed so hard to begin, and after all, like a good little woman, you opened the door for me yourself. I know I was striving to carry a load which should be laid at your feet. I am relieved, now look up and smile, and tell me, if you can, that my apostacy is not too great to contemplate."

"I can only say, dear, that I hope you are in the right, but I cannot as yet overcome my fears."

"Well, wife, we will talk more on these matters, and as I have yet very much more to learn, we will study together what Mr. Tremaine is pleased to call the 'laws of life.'"

CHAPTER IV.

MABEL'S BIRTH-DAY PARTY—MIRTH AND JOYFUL INNOCENCE

The first day of June and Mabel's birth-day morning, dawned at last in perfect loveliness. The soft balmy air laden with perfumes exhaled by the first venturesome flowers, gave a promise of the richness and fragrance of the full grown summer, beautiful type of Mabel's May hours just budding into life's summer, unfolding with the season's sun and showers to the promised full blown flower. Thus thought Mr. Tremaine as with loving eyes he watched "Our Mabel" flit to and fro, intent on the preparations for making her young friends happy.

It was decided as the weather was fine, to set the tables under the trees, and Mabel had said that the girls would be pleased to lend a hand she was sure, when the afternoon games were over, so Auntie Bet I shall have everything ready in dishes to put right on the table."

"Well chile, jis as you please, but it 'pears to me t'would be a heap nicer to have the tables sot and looking purty like when the young folks comes."

"But auntie it would look stiff, and I don't want

any stiffness, I want them to have a good easy time, and I am almost afraid we shall set your dear old head crazy, for I mean that they shall all play little children and forget everything else for one afternoon, so look out for a deal of romping and fun."

Just then Mr. Tremaine called, saying:

"I have an odd thought Mabel; do you remember those colored boxes that look so much like Chinese lanterns, only much smaller, that I had made for the Christmas tree that we were obliged to abandon? Well, you will have more goodies than you will use, have you not?"

"Yes indeed."

"Now what do you say to filling the same number of boxes with sweetmeats, that you have invited of young folks, marking each with a name, and putting some appropriate motto within. We will have uncle Sam climb the big cedar tree and hang them about on the branches, and before the young people go home he must climb it again and hand them down one by one."

"Splendid! splendid! How did you come to think of such a thing, uncle?"

"You left me to dream, Mabel, and I dreamed."

"Well, it does seem more like a dream than anything else but we'll make this one come true, wont we?"

"I'll bring you the boxes this minute, and say, uncle, don't you think if you print the names, that uncle Sam can read them himself as he hands them

down? It seems to me it would be ever so much more fun."

"That's a fact, so he might. Be off, then, for I must to work, all dreaming is ended."

Thus sped the happy hours, until 3 o'clock when the first comers arrived, followed by others in quick succession until the whole number of the invited, save May and Jennie Osgood were upon the ground.

Mabel was somewhat saddened at the thought of their absence, for she indulged the hope that they "would think better of it" and come. She was just saying to herself, I must forget it now, when the sound of wheels was heard, and a moment after, the Osgood carriage was drawn up, May and Jennie both alighting therefrom.

Mr. Tremaine went forward to meet them, and Mabel led them first to her room, and then out of doors to the other guests, introducing them in her own sweet way to those with whom they were unacquainted.

Merry and many were the games of that afternoon, bringing a bloom to the pale cheeks, and an unusual brightness to the eyes of some, unaccustomed to relaxation from toil and care or the joyousness of congregated youthfulness. Even Jennie forgot her contemplated dignity, by which she intended to vindicate her family pride, and yielded to the real nature within, of mirthfulness and glee. More than once came the tears to May's gentle eyes, as she felt how grand and noble was this act of Mabel's, and

whispered to herself, it is more blessed to give than to receive.

It was time for the evening refreshment, when Mabel said:

“Now girls, here comes uncle Sam and auntie Bet with the table. We are to have supper under the trees, and I thought you would all like to help me set them.”

“Yes indeed, and so we would,” came from many happy voices.

Odd Tom Joiner with his manful heart found his way to Mabel’s side:

“I say, Miss Mabel, aren’t the boys good for helping too?”

“Why yes, we could’n do without them,” then raising her voice, said: “Boys we need your help too. May and I will hand you the things from this side door, and as many hands make light work, we shall soon have our table spread. Tom let your strong arms do duty here, take this small bouquet and place it in the centre of the table, and the rest you may all arrange to suit yourselves.”

“Oh lovely!” “oh, how handsome!” “I should say it is huge,” were some of the exclamations, that greeted the appearance of an immense bouquet which uncle Sam had wrought entirely of wild flowers, most tastefully arranged, and presented to Mabel that morning.

Finally the tables were loaded, and Mabel appeared with auntie Bet bearing a tray of tiny nosegays, one

of which she placed on every plate, declaring then that all was ready.

Meanwhile Mr. Tremaine had been a quiet looker on, as he sat almost concealed from view, by one of the windows, indulging the thoughts and reasonings, that any gathering of human beings always unfolded to him. No wonder he started in surprise when a whole troop of young girls, with Mabel at their head, confronted him with the demand, that he should now appear upon the scene of action; demur he should not, and as a dear hand was placed upon his lips, and other hands clasped each arm, he could not; so then was he led to the head of the table, where stood his arm-chair of the study, brought hither by the boys, at Mabel's request.

Now the "goodies" began to circulate and all hands had as much as they could attend to.

During the afternoon many wonderments had found expression relative to the cedar tree with its burden of gay trappings, but Mabel had not seemed to hear a word.

One little fellow guessed "they wanted lanterns if it was in the day time," another, "I wonder what all those pretty colored things are for?" and once a sturdy little fellow essayed to "climb and see," his playmate "boosting him" when his little sister with more sense of propriety, quickly but gently put a stop to the act.

Now this same little fellow took into his head a new idea, and leaving his place at the table, with

his mouth still full of the nuts he was eating, came around by the side of Mr. Tremaine, and said, "Mr. Tremaine please tell us what all those bright things in the cedar tree is for, some of us fellers wants to know."

"Where, what things?" said Mr. Tremaine, looking everywhere but the right place.

"There, there up in that tree."

"Oh, why sure enough, what can they be?"

Mabel was smiling, as she knew the next attack would be upon her, but sober enough when the moment after they confronted her, with:

"Miss Mabel *do* tell us what is hanging up in that tree."

"Hanging in a tree? Why birds of course."

"No, no, not birds."

"Well then I'll have to give it up,"

"Why Miss Mabel we didn't say a conundrum; we want you to look up and tell us what those bright things is on those cedar branches."

Forced thus to look up, she exclaimed, "why where did they come from, what can they be, we must find out."

"There! they didn't know theyselves, I wish sis hadn't stopped me and we'd all a known before now"

The supper finally over, uncle Sam was called, and told that the young folks had discovered something bright dangling from that tree yonder, and they were all anxious to know what they were.

“ He, he, I'll climb the tree for to see, but I reckon 'dem birds make 'um nests up thar, jist cause its young Missus' birfday.”

So up went uncle Sam until he could reach the first bright box.

“ Why jist as sure as I live, thar's a name on 'de very bottom of 'dis ting.”

“ Read it! read it!” chimed in one and all.

“ T-O-M—*Tom*—J-O-I-N-E-R—*Joiner!*”

Poor Tom blushed to the roots of his hair, at thus becoming for the moment the observed of all observers.

“ Open it, open it,” cried they all,—and there appeared Tom's motto, which on taking out, disclosed the sweetmeats underneath. With the blushes still upon his face Tom turned, first to Mabel, with, “ I thank you” and then to Mr. Tremaine, but whatever the words he meant to utter, they died upon his lips, and he could but reach forth his hand in silence.

Each and all were receiving their boxes, some with many exclamations, and others with none at all, according as this mark of thoughtful friendship affected the participants.

As the distribution went on, Tom stood to one side and read his motto.

“ All are architects of fate,
Nothing useless is, or low;
Each thing in its place is best,
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.

“ For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled;
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.

“ Make the house, where *God's* may dwell,
Beautiful, entire and clean,
Else our lives are incomplete
Standing in these walls of time,
Broken stairways, where the feet
Stumble as they seek to climb.

“ Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base;
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.”

Mr. Tremaine had his eye on Tom, though seeming not to see, and saw the big tears gather, with the instant brush of his coat sleeve, and by that token, knew that the word arrows had not missed their mark, and that this “rough diamond” thus startled into thought, would become polished and reflective as the perfect stone.

Box after box had come down, each with its owner's name without, and motto within.

As you have noticed, Mr. Tremaine endeavored to make appropriate the latter by the needs he had perceived of the young people, many of whom he had known from birth. To May Osgood the message came,

“ Open thy heart to the earnest appeal
Of the stranger, who stands knocking without,
List, for it is thine own woe or thy weal
That he strives thus for a hearing about.

“ Loudly he knocketh, and then he knocks low,
 Listening for sounds that betoken response,
 And whispers oft sadly, so slow, so slow,
 But I will not go, till cometh she once.

“ Ah, I catch now a sound, she fears to ope,
 Dear child, pray fear me not, I bring no harm,
 But bear in my arms, sweet burdens of hope,
 That filled with all truth shall bury alarm.”

TO JENNIE:

“ Make thy heart a royal guest chamber, adorned with every charm and art, then fit reception give to those who come as guests, in shape of poverty, or want, or sin mayhap, whose need and woe, claims thy broad mantle of charity, for in such guise as these come oft the ‘angels unawares.’ From out the torches lit by love, ascends life’s sweetest prayers, and oft’ reveals a silvered side beneath mysterious clouds above.”

TO JANE BENSON:

“ Where’s no sin, there no shame is,
 Earnest souls make life’s work sweet,
 With murmur’s all the blame is
 Making bitter, duties meet.

“ Growth of soul is recompense,
 For those who can grasp the plan,
 And a deeper meaning sense
 In trials allotted man.

“ Courage then, all fainting souls,
 Learn that oft times loss is gain,
 Gain fails oft to reach its goal
 When it knows not losses’ pain.”

CARRIE LONG:

“Sweet the home where love is gleaming
Through eye, and tone, and touch,
Pure the heart where love’s no seeming
But seekest all its joy
In tender cares of life’s employ.

* * * * * *

“Rosy health is won to such
Winning heaven’s sweetest smiles
While walking earth awhile.”

CHAPTER V.

EDUCATION OF YOUNG LADIES—LIFE'S INCIDENTS AND RELATIONS.

A few days after Mabel's party Mr. Tremaine and Mr. Osgood met upon the street, and walking along together, a thing quite usual now, the former broached a subject which he said had been revolving in his mind for some time, namely, the advisability of sending Mabel to some thorough institute of learning for such a course of study as might be afforded.

“ You have daughters, Mr. Osgood, and I would like to consult with you and obtain your ideas upon the subject.”

“ Well, Mr. Tremaine, wife and I have been considering the expediency of that same thing, and after all the pros and cons we have about decided to send our girls off to school next fall. What we are to do without them is more than I like to think. We have considered the idea of a governess, but conclude the girls are too old for beneficial results, as we think they need the stimulus of an emulation only to be found in classes; and as Homer has no advanced and thorough-going school to send them to, some institute elsewhere seems the only alternative.”

“ Just so have I reasoned, and although I should better approve a home life all through the school days,

yet with you, I am constrained to believe, that under existing circumstances but one way seems open to us."

"By the way, Osgood, this must not always be the case with Homer; we must accomplish something better for its future. This educational feature is one that often absorbs my thought as it lays very near my own heart. But the way has not yet been made clear for the accomplishment of what to my mind seems necessary."

"Take my hand on that, Tremaine, I will work with you with both hands and heart."

"I see we must part for to-day, but may I not ask for an exposition of your thought and views in the matter of schools at some convenient time?"

"Certainly, my friend, as they are in their present vague promiscuity, and perhaps out of the heaps of unsorted lumber you and I can both present, we may be able to raise a building yet."

"Good morning!"

"Good morning!"

And so these two really good men, so unlike in almost every particular, went their several ways to work out the problem of life as presented in the phase of another day.

How differently would the same lesson, conned by each, appeal to their comprehension. One would accept any peculiar experience of a day as a guide or mark for future use; the other would take the same as a point at which to dig with the spade of reason, and

pick of comparison, for the deep root, Cause. For instance, some beggar might cross their path, the one man would only take cognizance of the fact, soliloquizing, perhaps, "chronic idleness, lack of industry, a *sure* result." The other would consider in this wise "a beggar, how came he so? What law's mysterious fulfillment here?"

Most likely he would take him kindly by the hand out of the sight of the curious, and learn his story, the revealment of which always made his heart ache in the realization before him of the result of some laws unfulfilled, thrown to the fulfillment of others.

One instance out of many, by the way of exemplification, for the student of the laws of life, no day dawns without a lesson containing a new truth, or some confirmation of the old in another phase. One spring time there passed by his cottage a man in middle life, whose gait was weary, while dejection and hopelessness so covered him that the words seemed written in letter's distinctness. As he approached Mr. Tremaine accosted him:

"I say, my good friend, you seem a stranger here. May I ask if it is so?"

One quick look of surprise gave the stranger, and then another whose mute appeal was never to be forgotten, yet he made no pretense of stopping.

"My good man, stop for an instant, let me do a neighbor's part; you are worn and tired, come in and rest awhile."

Thus brought to a halt he again looked up at Mr.

Tremaine in wonderment, then putting his hand to his head as though to remember whether he were dreaming or not, said:

“And does the good Samaritan still live?”

“Why, yes, my friend, many a one I trust.”

The man’s confidence was won by so kind a manner, and while Mr. Tremaine had set forth a wholesome repast, gave his name as Charles Howe, and answered with willingness, though with a modesty foreign to the many in his apparent condition, the leading questions Mr. Tremaine propounded. Guiding him on to forgetfulness of self, interest waxed to astonishment, and astonishment grew into pleasure at the finished speech and beautiful thought of the man as he warmed even into eloquence. Soon, however, the new found friend discovered that with all the flight of fancy and his evidently cultured mind, the stranger possessed scarcely a practical idea.

Ah! here is the point for the pick and spade—here is the outgrowth or effect of some cause. The law of this state of being exists in the fact of a soul combined with a body, or in the words of Paul, “there is a spiritual body and there is a natural body.”

Analogy, experience, thought, teaches that a certain amount of attention and care is due to both; that to neglect either will mar and stunt its growth; that a proper care of each renders one soulful and healthy spiritually and physically. One must do a certain amount of profitable labor to accord with certain laws in this mundane sphere, which require means for

bread and meat, house and home; or when fortune, money fortune, favor the few by inheritance, the law is just as stern and inexorable, that they have the faculty to judiciously manage and preserve the same or it fails them.

This man, whose story Mr. Tremaine took the trouble to authenticate, was reared in the lap of luxury—had inherited a fortune with an only brother—had lost it and was discarded by this brother as a worthless fellow.

From earliest childhood he had developed a great love of books, for both study and pleasure, and, gifted with a remarkable memory, his parents took a fond pride in the boy, encouraged but the one talent, not realizing that riches quite often take unto themselves wings, and vanish from sight; forgetful, too, that this son was receiving no inheritance by which to battle with life should the wings of riches actually grow.

Thus he grew up, retiring as a woman, and near as trusting, having no occasion for self-assertion, therefore becoming incapable of it while living upon the utterances of those he worshipped at the shrine of learning. Now, here he is, amenable to all the laws of this state of existence;—ignorant of most, therefore unfulfilling, suffering of necessity, the consequences of fulfillment and non-fulfillment. Bread he must have to sustain his body; if he cannot earn it he must suffer hunger; clothing he needs to protect and warm; if he cannot gain them he must suffer the need.

These things must be, whether the result of ignorance or inheritance; to some it is of the first, and to others it comes through the latter.

It is almost needless to say that Mr. Tremaine took this wayfaring brother by the hand, and rested not till he had helped him to obtain what he was incapable of procuring for himself, namely, a position where his one talent could earn the material necessities of life.

Ah! Mr. Tremaine, the "Golden Rule" is no dead letter within your heart, nor forgotten that "New Commandment" "Love one another." Would that the multitudes of earth could sense the sweet meaning of that divine command; that each soul could look upon all other beings as one great brotherhood and sisterhood whose ties bind as closely as those recognized in blood.

To the unthinking, this world seems only full of sin and evil. To the keen eye of love and charity it is filled with beauties untold and marvelous, and, startling, as it may seem, its very evil (evil by comparison) is grand because of results.

Aye, like a brood of hatching chickens are the inhabitants of earth, from the barely fecundated egg whose want of proper nurture, as condition, makes it abortive, up through the various stages of shell cracking to the full fledgling just stepping out from its narrow house, exulting in the freedom and pleasure of *life*. Some chicks of earth's brood are just getting their bills through, others have gotten their heads out

and the chipping process goes on; though unpleasant to see or to be in the way of the crumbling shells, (evils, sins) yet the soul life within is struggling up through such manifestations of conditions, to attain its native, stern demand of growth and freedom.

CHAPTER VI.

ODD TOM JOINER'S MOTTO.

Odd Tom Joiner had gone from the party that night, with his heart full to the brim with the thoughts and sensations that had been aroused in his soul, while one refrain kept ringing in his ears, "All are architects of fate," and in his late slumbers would it repeat itself continually.

Arising by the first peep of day, the new, yet indefinable desires of the night before rushed back with redoubled force, and pacing to and fro in his humble room, he resolved to know what meant this startling phase of himself.

Taking his motto of the night before, he read again: "All are architects of fate"—"all are"—"nothing useless is or low"—walking again and again the length of his little room, he stopped at last with firm set lips and glistening eyes and said: "That means me; I, too, am an architect; I will build." Looking upward, with an earnest speech he exclaimed: "oh! sainted mother, listen now, and oh! God, record my vow, and aid that I build then," "strong and sure," that I make "my house beautiful, entire and clean" where even Gods may dwell."

Then slowly putting on his hat, he started, although

still early, for the duties that awaited him, repeating as he went, "Our to-day's and yesterday's are the blocks with which we build."

Those who meet our Tom to-day will feel that some change has come upon him, though, perhaps, unable to give it a definition. A manly look and bearing has grown upon him, and the very atmosphere about him, seems clothed with force and will. Awkwardness has flown "wi" the night, and few will remember to say, "Awkward Tom Joiner." Such is the influence of the inner, upon the outward life. A craven nature will express the same physically, likewise a noble one.

Our Tom was awkward, but good-natured and honest, and liked for all his awkwardness, which was occasioned by the sincerity and conscious aspiration of his soul, without the knowledge of how to fitly express it. It was a kind friend, who revealed him to himself.

To go into detail, were it possible, as to the effect of that little act of thoughtfulness of Mr. Tremaine's, upon all its recipients, would, perhaps, be of no particular interest; and yet that little deed, yea, a great one, brought a renewal of hope and courage to some hearts, patience and new revealings to others.

Who can trace its whole results, a point of time returned to by many, as the date of some new emotion, or resolve; to some a wonderment only, until a revelation through experience, but to all whether consciously or otherwise, an influence which in degree must do its work, changing in degree again, the channel of a life.

CHAPTER VII.

OUR MABEL WITH JENNIE AND MAY OSGOOD AT THE ACADEMY.

By the fifteenth of September, Mabel found herself domiciled, with May and Jennie as companions and pupils, in the establishment of Madame Asterkoff, principal of the "Academy for Young Ladies" in Hayden. Refinement and culture bespoke themselves from Madame's face and bearing, and her motherly, quiet manner, quite won the girls at first sight.

In the first days of excitement from change, the letters home abounded with enthusiasm and pleasure. A few days later came the home-sick ones, but finally, when accustomed to the system and punctuality of the Institute, their tenor was more subdued and appreciative. Thus the months rolled on, with but the ordinary work of school life to mark their transit.

The weekly letters received at Homer by the two families, were important events, however, to the waiting ones in each. Mr. Tremaine often finding himself at the Osgood mansion, while both Mr. and Mrs. Osgood would drop in upon him, to exchange the news and welfare of the absent.

These girls! what a world of cherished hopes, of trust and ambition, lay centered in their young hands,

as all unconscious they were moulding for future fruition.

Mabel's letters were long and full to the uncle so dearly loved, keeping him posted as to her studies and daily progress. "For," she said, "you have so long taught me to express my thought to you in all my studies, that I should feel lost without it; besides, it is the best recreation I have, for then I am at home, as of old, on the cushion at your feet."

At another time. "You will remember, I wrote you last week, that our next composition subject was 'Silent Influence;' I now enclose it, as usual, for your perusal and criticism." As it is apropos just now, let us reproduce it here:

"SILENT INFLUENCE."

"Our subject assumes that there is such a thing as 'silent influence,' an influence that people exert upon each other, with no directly spoken word. At first thought, this might seem almost impossible, but the more we think of it, the more convinced we become that it is not only possible, but an existing fact.

"This influence is exerted and felt in various ways, with, perhaps, no intention of the parties to influence at all, and generally, I think with no knowledge or thought that words, looks or actions do perform that office. Sometimes a word spoken to another will set us thinking, and help to mould our thought; sometimes it is but the general bearing of a person, living

up to his own principles of life, a presence which we feel, and which has its effect upon us, as though taught by word of mouth.

“A look will express a thought, and reveal its character, disturbing somewhat the waves of our own thought and feeling. A noble action by even a stranger done, will make its mark and do its work upon those who witness it.

“When quite a small girl, I remember going into a bakery one day, on the floor of which lay a penny. I gave it no particular thought, but presently a little boy came in; he too saw the penny, at first with surprise, and then with a look of pleasure. Almost in the same moment his countenance changed, and he drew himself up as with pride and scorn, and passed the penny by.

“I have never forgotten that day: it holds its influence still, for it taught me a lesson I need often apply, namely, whether I resist temptations, or do a good deed, merely because I have been educated to do so, or from a deeper motive, principle.

“Probably there is no person who cannot recall many such silent teachings. To bring the subject home, how necessary does it become that we guard well our secret natures (‘for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh’), that they be pure and true, so our actions, words and looks may speak to others in their influence which must be felt in the responsibility we cannot shirk, of truth and honor, if nothing more.”

We will not attempt to follow Mabel and her friends through all the vicissitudes of a three years' term at school, suffice it to say, that they enjoyed it for the most part, and keenly relished the vacations at home. Of course they had their ups and downs of experience usual to boarding school life. For there congregates a miniature world, with its varieties of temper and disposition of thought and action, developing the natural results, to a certain extent, that accrues to the larger world outside its doors.

May and Mabel became fast friends, though as unlike in temperament as the father and uncle, yet the tie was strong, because of the most generous type. May, loving, gentle and tender-hearted, but true to the last degree to the principles which animated her, and the conceptions based upon them, which came to her in a natural progress through growth of mind and body, found in Mabel an inspiration to her best thought and action. Favored child, that thus the inborn gifts of inheritance, in congenial soil, could ripen to their legitimate fruition, carrying as she does, within her young organism, the frank, generous nature of the father, and loving tenderness of the mother as her inheritance from their first happy and trusting days of united life. Favored child, her life will be a blessing to others, and sweet to herself. She will love and be beloved, and her life's problem will be easier to solve than that of many others, alas! many others. Her life should be long, for the blood in her veins will course more equitably than the heart's blood of many another.

The unthinking world will bespeak for her, merit, and applaud her life, which though beautiful my May, and a rest to the weary hearted, and needful for aye, is but a rich inheritance. Flowers only are put in your hand, and good progenitors have withheld many weeds. Be thankful, and praise God, and only thank Him that you are not as other men, that you may use these gifts for them, acknowledging their receipt, in trust for humanity.

Mabel, too, finds both rest and growth in May's companionship, though the stronger nature of the two. She also possesses an inheritance from her parents' first fresh love, giving to her much of a sanguine and happy nature, but too, she inherits a reasoning faculty that will lead her many times out of the arms of affection, though longing for its company, to do the deed to which her reasoning conscience points as duty; if she cannot have both to walk together, she will suffer the loss of one to perform the other. Something of Mr. Tremaine's insight into cause and effect with his philanthropy, is hers, and life will unfold many a swift current and dangerous eddy, but she will breast them all with the twin and magic staff of love and duty.

On the threshold of womanhood these girls plighted their troth of a friendship which was to entertain a perfect trust under all circumstances, until by word of mouth a wrong was known, to put in practice should it ever become necessary, that charity which "believeth all things, endureth all things, hopeth all things and which suffereth long and is kind."

CHAPTER VIII.

SCHOOL EXPERIENCE.—TRIAL OF CHARACTERS.

It was early in June, and the school year was drawing to a close, when, much earlier than usual, a little knot of girls had gathered in the school room to rehearse their anticipations for the future, or some reminiscence of school experience past. Their unusual merriment sent out attractive peals of laughter, bringing in one after another until a goodly number of girls became not only listeners, but sharers in the fun.

In the morning talk at the opening of school the day before, Madame Asterkoff had reminded the young ladies of the passing time, saying a word to each class, according to its advancement, and finally to those whose last school year this was to be; bade them remember that school life and discipline is but the foundation for the after culture, or building to be erected upon it, adding: “Whatever you have made the foundation, strong and firm or loose and weak, so may you judge that the house will be, either secure against wind and wave, or ready to shatter at the first blast upon it, that cannot stand its own, but must weakly yield its place to the first stronger influence that comes its way. I wish I could make you com-

prehend this as I do now, for then it seems to me that some of you, who have loosely built, would go over your work again, and strengthen all the weak parts of a foundation insecure."

It was this lecture, as they termed it, that set them going with busy tongues this morning. Clara Bell had said, "it was just pokey nonsense, nothing more. I don't believe Madame ever was a girl, or if she was, she couldn't have had a spark of life or fun in her. I guess she was 'borned' an old woman, as little Judy says."

"Yes, and just think, Bella, of having to go over all ones studies again, just to make that wonderful foundation of hers, so sure and firm."

"La! Mollie, can't you see through that? She wants to make some of us feel bad, so as to get us to come back again and build a little more foundation, but for my part, I've got enough of it; and I don't need any more, I'm sure. I can read and write and spell, and what if I do forget the rules of grammar and arithmetic, a girl can get along very well without them and nobody be the wiser. And as to physiology, chemistry, and the like of that, why, I never intend to think of them again."

"Oh! Bella, Bella," shouted one and another.

"No, I don't, and no more will you my fine young ladies."

"Girls," said Maria Hop, "Bella is right, it isn't respectable for ladies to know too much; if they do they become so horrid, and people call them strong-

minded, and—and—the gentlemen won’t come near them.”

A peal of laughter finished this speech, when another, Mary Brooks, chimed in, with, “Oh, bother strong-mindedness, and foundations, and such things, we’ll soon be free to do as we please, and, then, what a delightful time we shall have in society, we shall have plenty to think of too, in planning our dresses, and,—” here our May essayed to speak, but a dozen voices were raised with, “no, no, Miss Prude, your word is no authority, we have already consigned you to a minister’s lot, where you will be just in place, a very obedient little creature, my dear.”

Just then a voice from the Madame’s platform startled the bevy, but it was only Maria Hop, who, with well affected mimicry, held forth—

“My dear young ladies, another school term is drawing to a close, and I have a few words to offer on this solemn occasion, a word of warning to all.

“Some of you will yet have another opportunity to benefit by the unsurpassable advantages of this institution, and I hope your tender consciences will improve each golden hour, but to those who are about to leave, •to enter not again these privileged halls, how shall I express the weight, the *great* weight of responsibility that now presses upon my bosom. Now I realize that you are indeed to step out in life as young ladies, and I would have you remember under *all* circumstances to have your foundation secure; from that of your bonnet, to a bow to your gentleman friend; and when

you receive attentions from young gentlemen, as you surely will, be sure to smile the *most* sweetly upon such as have good foundations for a living, and to the one whose foundation is silver, make sure to be married—ahem—I believe that this is the sum and substance of a girl's life, as I see it through my spectacles,—and now I bid you all farewell."

Mabel's cheek was glowing, and her eye kindling with a fire which grew intenser with every word spoken; almost without her will, and before she was aware, she, too, had taken the teacher's stand with a smile and attitude, as if to carry out the farce, but the first words spoken, subdued by their earnestness, the giddy crowd before her.

"Companions, schoolmates, let me remind you, how, though unmeditated, you are wronging one whom we all love and respect, whose winning patience has captivated us all. In her earnest expressions for the future of her scholars, can we not glean the idea that in her vocation and experience truths have come to her, which, if others could grasp, and cherish, by any means that she could bring to bear, life would grow easier, and expand more truly to the purpose of the Master, than, if all blinded by an ignorance which impels to an experience of its own—drops the hand that could guide and aid it, to follow oft and wearily its own *ignis fatuus*. The words of our Principal have exacted much thought from me, dear schoolmates; but it has taken a different form from that expressed this morning, and which, I am sure, in your soberer moods you cannot feel.

“My thought has resolved itself into this question. Why cannot we accept the experience of others who strive for our welfare, and avoid the compulsion of learning for ourselves some matters of life, before we can attain the benefit such personal experience would bring us? Our teacher tells us, that while we have the opportunity to study these books we should do so effectually, so that we can retain the facts contained therein, and know to a certainty that they are ours. Should we not believe then, that she has seen and realized, as folly, the putting aside slightly, unlearned tasks, while trusting the future to cover up the loss. I can imagine many a moment of silence, when longing to speak, because of an uncertainty as to facts.”

A sudden movement among the girls revealed the fact that Madame Asterkoff was present. She had entered unseen and been a quiet looker on and listener to Mabel’s speech, which was so abruptly brought to a close by the recognition of her presence.

With blushing face Mabel apologized for occupying and speaking from the platform, saying also, that “she had not realized how late was the hour.”

“My dear child,” said Madame, “I desire no apology, for what I have just heard from your lips, fully compensates, I believe to us all, for the ten minutes of tardiness to our tasks.”

As Mabel was taking her seat, she continued, “Young ladies, although I have heard nothing but what Miss Mabel has said, yet from the tenor of her

words, I can form some idea, and have only to say myself, that I should think that you had not only been answered, but well answered upon the subject you were considering."

"As you have received your morning lecture," looking pleasantly at Mabel, "I will not detain you, and we will proceed at once to the duties of the day."

CHAPTER IX.

ODD TOM JOINER'S PROGRESS.

Tom Joiner's apprenticeship to Mr. Jones, "builder," ceased within two years after the, to him, memorable night of the party.

Soon after Mabel's departure for school, Tom ventured to call upon Mr. Tremaine, and speak of the thoughts and aims his kindly hand had aroused in him, and to ask advice, as to how he could best attain the mental culture, he now so ardently desired. Our good Samaritan failed, not in this, but gave direction to the study and reading of the lad's leisure hours, so that when his apprenticeship had expired, he was fitted to enter an academy. To do this Tom had counted the cost, in labor, and economy, yet seemed firm in his resolve to overcome all obstacles, and win knowledge, the now necessary food for his longing soul.

After much anxiety and trouble, he succeeded in obtaining a country school to teach, for a three months' term, the proceeds of which, must be made to take him through his own first academic year. So well was he liked by the scholars, and directors of his country school, that at the close of his first term

among them, he was earnestly, besought to return the following year. With this piece of good fortune, he could go to his own studies with a mind unburdened of care, provided, he unflinchingly obeyed his purse, abiding by its law.

But the privations and struggles, of the coming years, we may not fully trace, save the moulding influence had upon the growing man, so we leave him to the test, whether he will remain firm and strong in the path he has chosen, or grow weak and vacillating of purpose. The chariot of time rolls on, on, ruthlessly sweeping all before it, with no compunction or fear, no halting or tenderness for either infancy, youth, manhood or old age.

This Universal Father slackens not in his pace, or looks once behind, upon the weakened and drooping, who fall out of place, and far from the gaze of those whose hands they have dropped, but presses onward still, going where, where? Aye, Father Time, old as thou art, cans't thou answer where? Nay, with all thy years upon thee, all thy hoarded wisdom light, thou cans't not answer where.

Thou may'st lead the chariot on, but the innumerable, myriad voices of universal nature's combined experience, can alone echo back the answer, where?

Though Father Time cannot answer where to individual souls, yet observation and age have taught him to smile on the great mortal throng as upon a band of little children, whose goal is before them; of youth and manhood, attaining which, perfect exist-

ence is to begin. Larger children have their goals for which to aim and work, giving purpose to life. Some lie on this side earth's portal, because, seeming of more *certain* access, and others reach across, behind the veil, that shuts the future from our eyes, they with more of hope, and faith and trust.

But time knoweth that whatsoe'er the goal may be, when attained, another goal springs up, and tempts the soul and lures it on, mayhap from star to star and sun to sun.

Time hath to do with our Mabel's and Jennie's, our Harry's and Walter's and Bob's, softening to beauty and fullness of grace, the path out of girlhood to woman's dear place, deepening the tone, gentling the heart and manner of boys, while stepping aloft to manhood's high throne.

Deepens the furrows on mother's dear brow,
And lays on the head of father's, his snow,
He tints the babe's cheek to rose of the morn,
And lends to the youth his beauty of form.

Clothed in dark garments, as of the black night,
Lays finger and hand upon the first born,
Nor heeds the cries that would put him to flight,
Looks steadily on, and whispers, re-born.

In chambers of love, where dwells a fair bride,
Glides in bright garments that seem but divine,
Whispers so softly, no hand shall divide,
Save coming and going, that which is mine.

In halls of the rich where selfishness dwells,
Enters unbidden, a guest at the board,
Of those, who dream not his fast fleeting spell,
Shall lay in the dust the gold they've adored.

Lies down by the pauper, whispers of hope,
When again he shall mark the flight of years
Daylight of plenty to his eyes shall ope',
To the past, fling back all miseries' tears.
To homeless and sorrowing, God's sent friend,
Scattering all ills, and bringing true balm,
Gives flight the evil that seems to descend,
And lays tired hands in God's tender palm.

CHAPTER X.

A WEDDING—SEPARATION AND RE-UNION.

Thus time has again brought us to the early womanhood of “Our Mabel,” as first introduced to the reader. The attributes of person and manner laid at the door of the philosophy of her nature, make her not only the light and joy of the loving uncle, but a sought-for and devoted friend ; a light in the social circle, she is no less in the homes of the poor.

Home duties are cheerfully performed, while the outer world claims a goodly portion of her time, and into whose pleasures she enters with a zest of real enjoyment, the gift of her health and youth. She demands of Mr. Tremaine a portion of time each day in the cozy study of her early attachment, where, she says, she must learn her catechism, he to answer, she to question. Thus, was formed the habit of a daily consultation upon any topic of interest to either or both. Many, many, were the questions asked upon the various topics of this moving generation, and which the good uncle was always ready, either to answer, or discuss, while leading and strengthening her to think and decide for herself.

Thus grew she, strong of mind, though not unwomanly of character, strengthened and prepared at

home, for the battle of life, to succeed these sunny days of youthful trust and love. It had now been considerably more than a year, since she with May and Jennie Osgood, had dropped the role of school girls, and the two latter had been away from home, visiting family relatives in a distant city for some months past.

It was already November, when Mabel, who had kept up a regular correspondence with the girls, received a joint letter from them, stating their early return home, somewhat sooner than anticipated, for, said Jennie, "I have something important to tell you, 'which, is why,' (this important matter,) we come home sooner, you needn't guess, because you can't—not exactly." And May, "oh, Mabel, how glad am I, that we shall meet so soon, for I am really tired of our gay life, and long for a quiet corner, my hand in yours, our eyes to meet, and then an old-time chat—one week to-day, and all well, we shall meet again."

Mr. Tremaine had looked up from his book at a low exclamation from Mabel, while perusing her letter, but spoke no word, until she at length exclaimed, "Oh! Uncle, the girls are coming home, even now may be on their way."

"Is that the case? they come earlier than they thought, but I rejoice for your sake, Mabel, you need your young companions."

Just at that moment hurried steps upon the piazza, and hasty knocks at the door, attracted their atten-

tion, and before they could be answered, in rushed May and Jennie, almost breathless, and full of enjoyment at the evident surprise they were giving—but in answer to queries, quickly explained, that to have the company and assistance of an acquaintance, on their journey, they had “just thrown things into their trunks” to come when he did.

“Now, Mr. Tremaine, you must lend us Mabel for a little while. Mamma told us to hurry back, but to get her to come and stay with us for a few days.”

“Well, but—”

“No ‘well buts’ for us, Miss Mabel, you are coming, that is settled.”

Late in the afternoon, Mabel took her walk alone to the Osgoods. The air was keen and bracing, and she walked briskly on, enjoying the splendor of autumn’s gay crowns of bright foliage on the trees which lined the streets through which she had to pass. Indeed, one could not go amiss of trees in this goodly town, and their autumn dress was the pride of all its people.

Engrossed with thoughts which the inspiration of the hour had given, Mabel had arrived at her destination before she was fully aware. The girls were in waiting and greeted her warmly, as also, Mrs. Osgood, who had come to claim a sort of mothership to the motherless girl.

The hours sped by as they always do, when bright and merry girls have to deal with them, and before the end of three days, Mabel not only had learned

the mysterious and wonderful secret which she must not guess, but heard it fully discussed and elaborated.

During their few months of fashionable city life, the girls had been recipients of much attention from gentlemen of the society in which their relations moved; and one among them, dashing, gay, impulsive, had yielded his hearts allegiance, as he claimed, to the shrine of Jennie's "mischievous eyes," and the "great catch" was thus lost to the girls with managing mama's or schemes of their own.

"A grand match" said the world, "decidedly fine. Cupid was wise to mate two beings so well up in the social world, and wealth to consummate all."

Of course Jennie was all elate with the prospect before her, and the excitement of preparations to be hastily made, as the impetuous would-be groom had declared against long engagements; "didnt believe in them, anyhow." No, the noose must be drawn at the earliest possible moment.

So the elders consenting, three more months would change the scene, and our little friend Jennie have assumed the role of mistress to a fine establishment of her own. What wonder that fancy conjured up the most delightful anticipations of luxury and ease, with "my Harry" thrown in.

May's quiet manner regarding a subject of such vital interest to her, almost tempted Jennie to think she might be the least bit jealous, and laughingly told her so one day, and got for reply.

"No Jennie, not in the least jealous. I am glad

you are so happy," and satisfied with that, the gay-hearted girl absorbed herself again in the dainty bits of work she had chosen for her own handiwork.

Dear child, little dost thou dream that thy sister holds in her heart a fear, as yet undefined to her own mind and thought, yet that which causes her to think of the mansion of bright visions to thy soul, as the doubly barred cage to confine the brightest of birds. May had heard her mother express her satisfaction at the match, and her father to say, "Well, well, I suppose the girl knows her own heart best," so half ashamed of the feeling she possessed, kept it hidden within herself, until with Mabel one day she gave it vent, saying, she "presumed it was all nonsense, and very foolish of her."

Mabel hoped there was no foundation in fact for such fears, but like Mary of old "pondered in her heart" which led her to wonder if marriage of their children was a matter in which parents really had no voice of advice, only a recognized part of the machinery to the end thereof, ending with, "uncle and I must talk that out the very first opportunity."

Meanwhile Mabel was much in demand, and was to assist at the marriage ceremony. The wedding came off at the time appointed, and was the grandest affair that Homer had ever witnessed. Friends and relatives, from near and far, came to be present at the launching of another pair into the troubled waters of life. The wedding guests all gone, and the new made husband and wife having departed on their journey

“till death,” Homer again settled down to its every day life.

We may be sure that May, with her father and mother, keenly felt the loss of the gay and bright spirit that had plumed its wings and flown to another nest than theirs. But May said,

“Mabel, we must be sisters now.”

“Yes, and daughter too,” said Mr. Osgood, with glistening eye.

“Already adopted,” whispered his wife, as she folded her in a loving embrace.

Mabel gaily replied, “I surely must kiss my father and mother,” and brought back the smiles that had near been lost in that moment of sadness.

CHAPTER XI.

UNCLE TREMAINE'S VIEWS OF MARRIAGE.

“Now uncle,” said Mabel, “do you know what we must discuss this morning? no, perhaps not discuss, but what I want to have you talk to me about? Of course you don’t, you dear old uncle, how could you. You will smile when I tell you my theme, but then there was never a sting in any smile of yours.”

“Well, well, my Mabel, what wonderful question have you purposed now to stagger me with.”

“Marriage, uncle, from beginning to end.”

“Have you caught the fever Mabel, and taken this way to entrap an old man into a complete submission?”

“No indeed! I want to know a great deal more about it before I take such a wide leap.”

“But you know I was never a married man.”

“Yet that does not hinder you from having opinions, yes, and knowledge too upon that subject. Come uncle, come out and show your colors.”

“How shall I begin?”

“Perhaps I had better tell you what set me to thinking on the subject; but I must speak of Jennie’s marriage.”

"You know hers was rather a hasty affair from engagement to marriage." "Friends seemed delighted at so splendid a match, and through them, with some previous knowledge of the high social standing of the young man's family, and believing that Jennie had really fallen in love, Mrs. Osgood had but little hesitation in confirming her choice, and Mr. Osgood assented, I think, partly because his wife thought favorably of it, and again, because as he said he didn't know much about women's hearts. He wanted her to be happy, and free in her choice, and supposed she was the best judge of what her heart required. Then I began to wonder at it all, and whether parents really have no right to help their children's judgment, but should leave it all to what they call 'blind love.' Plainly, to my eye, Mr. Osgood does not feel exactly easy about this marriage, though he tries to think that he has done all he could for his child. May does not feel perfectly happy, for she says, that try as she may, there is an undefined and as yet shapeless fear regarding it, that makes her feel that her sister is only entering a beautifully gilded cage. With her, I try to put that idea away, and hope that the sadness of parting is alone its cause."

"Mabel, you have propounded a serious question, indeed, and one that is exercising the best minds of to-day, for so many problems rise up to confront one seeking for truth, through cause and effect, and there are so many causes and their consequent effects, that one may well be puzzled. Marriage should be indeed

a holy tie, so holy that every precaution for its safety and the continued purity of a first strong love, should be taken in advance, and every test applied, so far as possible.

“ Although we are progressing in knowledge and have attained many facts which suggest varied theories to differing minds, yet I do not suppose any mortal of the present time can quite comprehend and lay down laws for the mysteries of physical life. Physical life is of itself a problem, and one which the world at large is apt to consider apart from its algebraic connection with spiritual life, which when calculated upon, gives more of study, and yet which to my mind, presents the key to this human and divine sum of life. As I believe that nature and God hold no mysteries in reality from men, only so far as through their ignorance and undesire for truth they have kept their eyes blinded to plainly spoken expressions, and ears unattuned to their beckoning sounds, and lips unaccustomed to the breath of communion with God, through his avenues of nature, so I believe, that the time, though distant, will come when God’s works and plans revealed through nature’s laws, will be unto men as an open volume, and mystery a word not known within its pages. Then law and God, God and law shall become synonyms for the expression of perfection in every department of the universe of life.

“ That so many unhappy marriages exist to-day, is, to my mind the result of ignorance of laws hereditary,

laws physical and those of psychology, and also ignorance of the parties themselves as to their real needs which they thus blindly seek. I perceive that I shall have some difficulty in presenting my ideas, but I am thankful that naught will prevent you from seeking for truth from whosoever lips it may fall; and now that your mind has begun its questionings upon this subject, it is time to speak quite plainly, though it may be like the blind leading the blind, with, perhaps, amid the stumbling, a firm step here and there.

“One thing let us not lose sight of, as we pursue our subject, and which at least ought to make us charitable and unjudging of the acts of others, namely, that the instinct of every soul, though undefined to itself, is with unerring certainty struggling through conditions of every kind and nature, to attain its highest and best expression. Condition of circumstances may warp it, condition of birth all but strangle it, yet there it is, unseen but to the close observer here, and the great God, through whose fulfilling laws it suffers, and through whose fulfilling laws again, it shall at last stand free of shackles, to acknowledge and adore the justice of a God whose laws are of love. There are marriages of convenience, to keep property in a family, to continue family name and hereditary rights, for a home, to escape if possible the burdens of life. To have one’s house attended to and wardrobe kept in order, and, too, as you say, for the eclat of making from a worldly point of view, a fine match.

“There are also marriages resultant from strong physical attractions alone, which the young mistake so often for that eternity abiding *soul love*. We can but pity such when the awakening day shall come, when physical attraction has spent all its fires, and no *kindred spirit* is found to exist between the parties thus tied for life before man’s laws. Sometimes a fearful passion of an hereditary nature mars the peace and steals the crown from off the marital brow. Sometimes there is no physical mating, while perhaps the ideality and spiritual perceptions of the one is mate for the other, and has been the sole attraction; then can there be no true marriage. To another, the spiritual love has been revealed through the physical, while perhaps the partner of such union, perceives naught but the physical portal still. Temperament asserts itself fully when the excitement and pleasure of wooing and courtship have passed away, unblinding the eyes that were glamoured thereby. And still another fruitful cause of unhappiness, and distrust leading to discord, is the assumption of a garb of dignity (that would not have been tolerated in the wooing days), which renders one too proud to stoop to the *then common* courtesies, when the wife was a miss, and the husband a young man of favor.

“Thus the ready chair, the answering smile, the approving nod, the ‘thank you,’ ‘my darling,’ ‘my dear,’ and the very kiss to seal it with, walks straight out of the honeymoon’s door, as second-hand clothes that some one else may wear. Yet each heart in

silence will long for such tokens and grieve at their loss, while each day's restraint and reticence therein, swells a false pride and makes what in the first loving days was spontaneous and full of soul, a hard thing to compass; and so the pride gains strength, the hearts hunger and suffer on, full of wonderment why life has grown to be such a blank, when it opened so gloriously.

“Strange mortals that we are, so slow to learn that the more we love, the more we can love, and the more endearments we give, the more we are capable of giving; for this mine of wealth founded by God, when duly worked upon, brings up treasure after treasure of more and more worth. Did we not see some glorious exceptions, and meet, occasionally, the truly wedded, truly all hope for better things might well die out. The items I have mentioned are but bare instances of some of the causes leading to unhappy marriages, for they are manifold, and intricate as a cobweb, as one condition runs into and affects another, seeming to cross and recross each other, and thereby annulling, apparently, God's own laws, in reality, but the result of man's own sin, for ante-natal causes are legion-named, which affect both the physical and spiritual being of man.

“To my mind, then, a true marriage is a perfect mating of two beings physically as well as spiritually—spiritually as well as physically. Though believing this, I do not see how any rule or plan can be laid down whereby all persons may be gov-

erned to the attainment of such an end. Occasionally we see almost a heaven on earth, which serves to heighten our ideas, producing a better standard in our minds as to what married life *should be*. But I am reminded that this life of earth is not heaven, and that the just mentioned oases are the glimpses given here of the perfection beyond, to those who have attained to such a reward, just as the few are blessed who have attained it here."

"Why, Uncle! You speak as if you believed there is marriage in heaven; the common idea is that there is no marriage, or giving in marriage, after death."

"I see no reason to doubt it, for so far as I have been able to learn, a perfect life of any kind is dual, having its male and female characteristics; true, there may be no 'giving in marriage,' for I judge no laws of compulsion exist, and the union of souls is so natural and true that no one stops to question of rites."

"How, uncle, are you going to account for the majority of marital ties under the ban of unhappiness in a variety of degrees?"

"As before, through nature's laws hereditary, and the soul's need; all do not suffer alike, or from the same causes; what to one soul is keenly felt, another would not feel at all, and *vice versa*. Thus, after all, the condition of suffering or happiness rests in the soul's development, as I contend, up through the vicissitudes of this sphere of life, as experienced from our remote ancestry up to present time. I believe,

too, that every soul must and will have its own individual experience and knowledge for itself, though it leads through hells to the attainment; and there be those who, by reason of nature's fulfilling laws, take their pathway through hells, that the dross of their being be purged as by fire. Through no personal credit do others pass more easily on, not tempted to the worst forms of sin, but meeting with experiences peculiarly their own, through which nature and God hath decreed they must pass; and so on, no two mortals can have the same experience or knowledge. I do not need all of my grandparents' experience, or that of my parents, for as it were, much that they gained in knowledge of life is engrafted through intuition's keen sense, upon my own tree of life; therefore I need my own experiences suitable to my own wants and needs of soul."

"Then there seems no help, uncle, for unhappy conditions here; people must go on plunging blindly into what may or may not prove happiness, a mere luck which it then is."

"Yes, Mabel, just so, until that almost forgotten command, to 'Know thyself' is obeyed; then, and not until then, will a more perfect happiness dawn upon the world. We look about us and note with criticism, the faults and failings, or virtues of our fellow beings, until our eyes become detectives, and quickly perceive, in our bigoted opinion, what the necessary punishment or reward should be, and, left to ourselves, would hurl it forward with no ear for the cry for mercy, or the voice of justice.

“ But for our own faults we have no eyes, while claiming merit for the discovery of those in others. Of our own true motives we also know almost nothing, but those of our neighbor are mirror bright; of aim and aspiration we know still less and seldom give our friends even the advantage of such a credit. How much less, then, do we know or care for our inheritance of body and spirit, of what quality of mind we should stimulate to better growth, and what weed out entirely, and keep weeding out until the spirit within us that perceives the necessity for such weeding, has overcome its enemy, or the physical has been dropped to leave the spirit free from the shackles of temptation? How seldom does one stand still to say, ‘here am I, the inheritor of such a body; it is not a perfect one; it is frail here; can I strengthen this portion? I will try; it is not well developed in any part; can I aid in that? I must and will. Now my spirit tendencies; I acknowledge to myself that I am querulous and fault finding; can I not learn to grow quiet and close my mouth? But with all I enjoy being generous; I love to give to others; yet, I somehow perceive that there is something more than that. I will carry that trait further and be generous with what seems to be the failing or faults of others. I will try to find some reason, charitable to their actions, which urges on and causes them to do thus and so. I am a little too trustful of all classes of people; let me be on my guard that I, by my own acts, become not the temptation or stumbling block to a weaker brother; not trustful enough

of human nature; then must I strive to put more faith in the general goodness of act and intention of my fellow beings, and not so much believe they have a selfish purpose in all they say and do!

“ ‘I begin to realize that I actually know nothing of myself, for now that I begin to look within, I am constantly surprised at demonstrations of character I really did not dream that I possessed. With all my failings I love humanity, and would see it grow to a more perfect and beautiful life, and, although it seems but little that I can do, comparatively, in a work so vast, yet I desire to do that little, and it may be the loving God of law and order will not consider it small, when it is the utmost that my body physical and my body spiritual can accomplish on this earth; for I shall not be working alone for the perfection and freedom of self, but for that of those who may be of me, to whom shall be handed down some result of my labor as an inheritance.’

“ Now, Mabel, take one woman awakened thus to a high aim of life, and a specimen of manhood to the same, and suppose the case of attraction between them, both believing in and practising self control for the same purpose, do you not believe that the children of such an union would have somewhat nearer perfect bodies, and better condition of minds? Then let us suppose that while children still, these parents instil their habits, and ideas of soul and body growth, to their offspring, who shall be an improvement upon the parent, and who in their turn, should

they be able to obtain partners of a like aim and belief, would hand down a better inheritance still to their children, and so on.”

“Even *one* parent so imbued, can take a long step toward the improvement of our race. But the difficulty is, that those who give thought to these things are few and far between, yet we have the few, and the humanitarian’s hope is that the little leaven will, eventually, leaven the whole lump.”

“I think, uncle, I get your ideas; but I want to ask one question about the hells you speak of as a necessity to some, and of lesser sins, or ‘not the worst form of sin.’ If it is a necessity for souls and bodies to pass through hells and sins on earth, as I understand you, for the soul’s development, and growth to something better, why do we call it *evil* and *sin*?”

“Yes, I must explain myself. I use these terms because they are the means of comparison commonly used, to express, by the world at large, a certain condition or state of humanity. When we use the words sin and evil, they at once call to mind something not up to our standard of good and happiness; sin or evil which may be bad or worse according to our means of comparison, as good, better, best are comparatives of goodness and happiness. What appears evil to one man has no such appearance to another, whose standard is below that of the former, because he has not outgrown his own lower condition, though it is the condition suitable for his present state of progress, though you and I would be apt to

say, like the little girl the other day, that it is the 'worst kind.' A man addicted to his cups finds a certain pleasure which a temperate man would shun as anything but pleasure. And you will see, as you ponder more on these things, that it is the condition of growth, of soul and body, that pleasures and evils appeal as such to individual comprehension.

"But come, Mabel, this will not do; our talking time was up long since, you must try to carry out some of your old uncle's notions by taking your accustomed exercise, for the sake of your bodily growth, my dear." And the uncle patted the soft hair, and kissed the sweet lips instantly pleading for the same.

CHAPTER XII.

TEN YEARS LATER.

Dear reader, cross with me a ten years' bridge of time, to find ourselves within a large and growing city, whose means of wealth bespeaks itself in its busy commerce with surrounding, and even distant, parts of country, through its foundries, manufactories, milling and shipping interests.

Amid the thousands of homes centered here, is one whose splendor dazzles even the eyes of fashion's votaries. Its mistress, a pale and delicate woman, would be called beautiful, were she painted with the color of health. Seated now in her luxuriant chamber she is gazing, apparently, into vacancy, but a moment's observation shows that her mind's eye is far away, dwelling upon some other scene than this, while a fallen book rests upon the floor at her feet.

A knock, and the entrance of her maid announcing an intimate friend (?) aroused her from her reverie.

“No, Marie, tell her she must excuse me, for I can see no one to-day.”

With a look of surprise, but in silent obedience, the girl went to do as she was bid.

A new light came to the lady's eyes as she sprang to her feet and locked the door after the girl.

"No! I cannot bear it to-day. I've had enough of that woman's prating about how fortune has favored me, how happy I must be with 'everything' at my command, and so on endlessly."

"Everything, indeed! as if all a woman could want, or understand, is a fine house, plenty to eat and wear, and a carriage to ride in; and if I hint that something more is necessary to a perfect happiness, she answers: 'My dear, you have every comfort possible, and you, above others, should be content and happy;' and as for anything else, she continually repeats, 'well, you know that it is woman's lot to suffer, men will do and have their own way; it is their nature,' and sighs, 'I suppose God made the difference, and we, as weaker vessels, must not complain.' God made the difference, indeed! I'm sick and tired of the trash! and if other women like it, I don't. To be told continually, and sarcastically, too, as Harry did this morning, that 'women were only made for pets and playthings for we men.' Yes! and to be really thrown on the floor and into a corner like a veritable doll, there to stay until the *owner* shall be in the mood to play again!"

The pale cheeks were full of color now as she slackened her quick pace about the room, and then stopped to exclaim. "Oh! why *is* it, that Harry and I are so changed."

Another knock on the door was unanswered, and still another before she opened it, to hear that there was a lady in the parlor who would not go away, though

told that the madame could see no one to-day, "and did not want to send her card, but called me back to hand you this."

The mistress' cheeks paled again as she read "Mabel."

"Marie, tell her no; stop, stay a moment outside until I give you an answer," and retiring once more behind the closed door she exclaimed, "What shall I do?" If I refuse to see her, mother and father will hear it, and then they will think something is wrong, though I have striven so hard to blind them to any such suspicion. Yes, I must see her dear face and play the hypocrite with my masked one; but, oh, dear (looking at the mirror), she will see how thin I am, the old time Jennie all gone. Well, it must be."

"Marie, ask the lady up to my room."

"What wonder next," soliloquized the maid; "her intimate friend the madame will not see at all, and the stranger is to be shown to her room."

"Ah, Marie, does not even your maiden heart catch some tones from the symphonies of other hearts?"

Hasty feet answered quickly the summons "up stairs," and the next moment Mabel and Jennie were in each other's arms before they had a good look at each other; when they did, after the embrace, Jennie saw the look of pain and surprise in Mabel's eyes, and then reminded of the moment forgotten mask she was to wear, began to ply her with many questions, as to when and how she came to the city,

how long she was going to remain, etc., etc., which Mabel got no time to answer until the masker subsided in a measure, and then she told Jennie that she had been in and near the city some time, but that important duties, consequent on moving and settling, had prevented her from calling on her old friend sooner, but having resolved to embrace the very first opportunity to do so, "I found and have fulfilled it this morning," and "Jennie, how glad I am to see you once more; the five years, since last we met, have brought many changes, both in us and our old homes. Homer is changing rapidly, improving every way, we think, you should see it."

"Yes, Mabel, I have been dreaming of home all this morning, and was aroused but a few moments before you came, and that is about the only way that I can get there these days."

"But, Jennie, it would do you good and put a new life into you, for I judge this city life is taking all the bloom out of your once rosy cheeks; are you quite well?"

"No, Mabel, I have not been for some time, but I cannot make up my mind to leave my own home and Harry, you know, though I've been intending to leave the city for a long while; but the children are well, and so I keep putting it off for myself."

"Your children, Jennie, I should like to see them; five years atop of babies' heads work wonders for them."

"Yes, they are with their governess now, we will

look in upon them after awhile. The baby you saw, my May Belle, is now seven years old, and Harry nearer nine. You know my baby of a year since, I have lost; she was just six months old, and it did seem to me she was the sweetest baby of all."

"Oh, Jennie, I felt like flying to you then, for the nearness to death of my own little one, a short time before, made me realize more fully than I else could have done, the deep sorrow which had fallen upon you, and although it is not the gift of mortal to lessen the affliction of death, through any sympathy, however sincere, yet the sympathy gives strength, oftentimes, to bear and struggle onward with the loads of life; and so I longed to come near, and put my arms about you, and support you there as I do this minute, dear Jennie."

Mabel had left her seat, the quivering lips and eyes full of unshed tears seeking relief and threatening a storm so unwilling to break, were too much for her love and true friendship to sit quietly under, as she intuitively comprehended the need for a freshet of tears, to revive the (for some reason) withering heart.

For some moments no word was spoken, though heart answered to heart as the tired head of the weeping one lay in the arms of her old time friend; and so much had passed through the minds of both, in that restful moment, that Jennie started up quickly at last, believing, for an instant, that she had actually revealed her secret, an acknowledgment of her soul

that it had communicated, though by no word of mouth, the sorrow she had sought to hide, and at last to bury within the sepulcher of her own frail organism.

Regaining speech at length Jennie attempted some faint words of apology for her "seeming weakness."

"Do not speak of weakness, Jennie; do you know, or did you ever think, that our hours of sorrow and grief, even of mortification and chagrin, are our hours of strength? I firmly believe it, for in them alone, do we gain such an insight of ourselves, of our true and unmasked nature, together with the desires and capabilities of our souls, as when thus freed from the vanities that compass us in our apparently more flourishing moments. What we call our trials are hard to bear for the very reason that our natures are deficient of the knowledge such lessons are designed to teach; and each soul must have its own, according to its need for growth and strength of its several parts."

"I have not thought of one's troubles in that light, Mabel, but I think you may be right, although I have never gone further than to feel the injustice, as it seems to me, of some things; yet since you speak of it, I know that I am somewhat wiser now than the Jennie of ten years ago, and withal have not even the appearance of the gay and thoughtless girl of that time, yet I do not know that I am either stronger or better for my experience."

"Perhaps you do not realize it yet, but, Jennie, I

suppose that all our moments are good for us, of pleasure as well as of pain, and all the intermediate conditions, and I am sure I am glad to have seen you this morning, after so long an eclipse of your face, and I am sure it has been also *good* for me to have had this pleasure. One look at your children and I must go."

Startled as Mabel had been at the sight of Jennie's pale cheeks, she was infinitely more so at the slender and delicate children of her friend. Already the caged birds of fashion, condemned each day to nursery and governess, until the little cheeks were flushed with weariness, the limbs tottering, and the poor little brains unable to grasp at anything but the one great want of growing childhood; the pure air of heaven and freedom of limb.

Mabel's eyes now filled with tears as she witnessed the sickly politeness of fashion's false standard, and turned to leave before the thoughts of her mind should find relief in words.

Oh, world! world! oh, people! people! why is it ye seek after that which bringeth recompense only of sorrow and pain; which crampeth the body and bigots the mind. Why auction the body for the price of thy gold, which in sorrow is scattered again, to purchase the field of blood wherein to lay the flesh and bones of thy sold birthright; and worse, and worse still, the God-given inheritance and birthright of your children, upon which thou hast laid fraudulent hands, thinkest that thou wiit be shielded before the Eternal,

for the robbery from nature of her choicest gifts, bestowed from a wealth of pure love, upon the children she has laid in your arms?

No, *no*; tried and found wanting; seeing, ye are blind; walking, ye stumble; hearing, ye are deaf, because the voices are strong and more popular, heard in all quarters of earth crying out, "*strive all of ye for gold, gold and high place; give way, ye commoners! to the racers that checker the field, and the prize to them that shall win.*"

The eternal *lives*, and will make the falsities of life to return upon themselves as weapons, to punish with afflictions of sorrow, through disease, poverty, scourgings and death. A recompense exists for every wrong and sin in the hands of the Almighty. "Recompense is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay," and who shall doubt it?

Mabel had told Jennie that she had come to live within a short distance of her city, her husband being occupied daily within its limits; that for many reasons they had concluded it best to reside some distance out, and so were now ensconced in a neat, though not a spacious dwelling, having the advantages of a large garden, small orchard and a lawn of no mean size at its front.

It was but a pleasant drive from the city, and only a few minutes walk from the railway station of a road passing not a half mile away.

Approaching her home, after parting with Jennie, Mabel's eyes and ears were greeted with the sound of

a boyish shout of glee, at sight of his mother, towards whom he was plunging head foremost, in the full strength of his young and healthy blood; her four year old, stooping to lessen the blow of his coming speed, and to kiss the lips, calling in affections sweetest note, the dear name "Mama, Mama!" she met her boy; taking his hand, until at the threshold they were met by the cooing, and jumping almost out of nurse's arms, of the baby May, which she took, and in taking spoke softly to herself, "Oh my children, I will not rob you of all health-giving things for your little bodies, though the world say you will grow to be fools, unless cramped and crammed into the mold it has made for its children.

CHAPTER XIII.

ODD TOM JOINER REAPPEARS.

Three years after Mabel left school, Homer was somewhat surprised by the advent of a stranger, or one apparently, for an evident polish and refinement, combined with the fine physical development of the young man, put to flight the memory of many of the but a few years since, "odd Tom Joiner."

Our Tom had come back to revive for a few days the associations of his childhood and youth.

He had kept up an occasional correspondence with Mr. Tremaine, whom he insisted on looking upon as his benefactor as well as friend, and his visit now, was by Mr. Tremaine's invitation.

He had successfully and honorably closed his scholastic years, giving, through Mr. Tremaine's advice, particular attention to such studies as would best aid him in the chosen direction of business pursuit.

Life was beginning to hold out her enticing hands to his strengthening manhood, beckoning him on with the fair pictures of fancy's brush, and he was beginning to listen, and to gaze out into the future, whose promises from the year past, since leaving his college walls, were fine indeed, while giving more direct study

to the pursuit of architecture; for thus had he decided, not only to become the architect of his “Fate,” but one of design, through which industry he must now obtain the means of livelihood.

The year past had been spent with a Mr. Camper, an architect of not only note and influence, but one capable of teaching and guiding the younger man, whose assiduity had awakened in the tutor’s mind a more than common interest. This being the first time that Mr. Tremaine had seen Tom since he left the village, he watched him with deep interest during the few days allotted for his stay, an interest which grew into esteem, as he fathomed the character that had been developed in him.

Toward Mabel something of the old boyish manner returned, of mingled admiration and veneration, causing less freedom of speech when with her, than with Mr. Tremaine, who had the faculty of drawing him out in opinion and thought to the utmost. At such times Tom forgot all else but the subject in hand, and revealed himself more perfectly to the good friends than he dreamed, or could in any other way have done.

But the days sped away, and Tom with them, leaving behind a sincere regret, and taking with him a newer desire to become worthy, through his life, of the esteem and kindness of his early friends, together with an earnest invitation to return with the holidays six months hence.

Tom returned to his duties with a manly heart, but

soon, to his dismay, he made the discovery that his zeal had flagged, and fancy refused to paint as glowing pictures as before; he thought he must be losing health, and found himself thinking often of the quiet retreat he had just left, but with no other thought than of its rest in companionship with its inmates who were more revered than all others in his mind.

Some three months after his visit, on going into the office one morning somewhat later than usual, and pleading as apology an intense headache, Mr. Camper arose to meet him, and clapping him on the shoulder, said,

“Tom, my boy, I’ve just been thinking about you, there is something wrong with you, and you need a change of some kind, so I am going to discharge—”

“What, sir!”

“Ha, ha, ha, yes, discharge you from the duties of this office—for a time. Shocks are good, I see; you look better already, got a new circulation, hey? In other words, you remember the plat we got the other day, of a new town just laid out some fifteen miles from this city? Well, this morning I have received an application from the company (a rich one you know), who have this thing in charge, to build ten cottages, not to exceed a certain figure as to cost, and to contain as many conveniences as possible. Also, I am told, that two other architects are to design and build the same number; this you see gives them the advantage of competition and variety of taste, for the style and finish, is to be left to us.

“Now, I am getting to be too old a man to leave my family as much as this undertaking would compel me to, and yet the temptation to show off the colors of *our firm*, is too great to resist. I see your eyes are saying, ‘is he himself this morning?’ Never more so, my dear sir, I mean just what I say, here are my credentials, read.”

“City of —, April 16, 18—.

‘We, the undersigned, John P. Camper and Thomas Joiner, have this day formed a co-partnership, to be known as, Camper & Joiner, Architects, etc.”

“Do you mean it?” exclaimed the now excited Tom, as he sprang forward, coming nearer to his employer.

“Mean it? of course I do old fellow. Don’t you see the selfishness in it though? See here, this is my plan, I shall accept the building of those cottages, and stay at home, send you out there to superintend and direct; of course we will consult and plan together when necessary, and you being known as my partner, will be acceptable in my place. Now, my boy, I want you to try your metal, I wish you to make your own designs, and if there is any point you wish to consult about, I shall be always ready, and don’t you see, if your young brains should win applause, I would get the credit after all?”

But Tom could not see the selfishness, and with a grateful heart thanked his employer for his generosity and kindness, expressing his hope to be able to prove

how much he appreciated it, at some future time. The tide had risen, and the visions of fancy were again floating on its wave, renewing the vigor and tone of his heart's blood, through the action of purpose, and hope.

With the confidence and trust of youth, buoyed up with an inspiration he as yet, wot not of, Tom labored early and late, to perfect and combine the requisites for this new and charming undertaking; meeting approval from his employer, now partner, and not a few side glances of surprise and almost displeasure from his competitors in the field.

As the work nears completion the pictures of hope grow brighter and more definite in character, until conviction of truth comes almost suddenly upon him, alarming and disquieting, as he names to himself what seems a presumption, and recognizes the true source of his inspiration in work. The man again is changed, through a quiet dignity, which the reign of a pure and noble love inspires, even though its object unrequites.

Tom's cottages were now complete, tasty, beautiful and neat, outrivaling while unique, those his competitors had raised, and to whose honor, be it said, cheerfully laid aside personality in the matter, in the pride of recognition of what their art could do.

Tom had given no intimation that the symbols of these new structures had birth in his own brain, nor had Mr. Camper disinherited the praise bestowed upon him from all sides, in view of testing the vanity or strength of our Tom.

Satisfied that Tom's gratitude would forever seal his lips as to the truth of the matter, Mr. Camper, with apparent undesign, revealed the facts to one whom he knew would put the information to good use; and thus it was that within a few weeks after the cottages were finished, the "*Local Journal*" came out with the following article, viz.:

"Our readers are familiar with the sketches our Journal has given from time to time, of the rise and progress of the cottages so lately built in our new suburban town, which was planned by a wealthy company of citizens and named 'Retreat;' they have also followed with interest the growing plan and style of the buildings, under each of the three architects selected to show their skill and taste; since their completion and test, the work of each has been pronounced as highly praiseworthy, though giving to our much esteemed citizen and architect, Mr. John P. Camper, rather the palm for extra beauty and finish, while the substantial and convenient was not the least slighted.

"It now becomes not only our duty, but pleasure, to announce from the very best of authority, Mr. Camper himself, that the entire work of design and finish, were those of his young friend and partner, Thomas Joiner. Our citizens are not slow to recognize true genius, and will appreciate the fact that one of our own young men is rising to a place among the first of our already justly renowned architects, and will, as his brother architects have already done, extend to him the right hand of fellowship. As Mr. Camper has formed a co-partnership with his young friend, they will be known hereafter, as before announced, as 'Camper & Joiner.' "

The holidays were drawing on, and Tom, though now on the way to prosperity, found himself quite timid and shrinking at thought of the visit he had promised to make, and of which he was reminded by a letter from Mr. Tremaine.

Incongruous human heart, longing yet fearing, determined yet undetermined, hoping yet faithless, happy yet unhappy, what can we do with thee?

Methinks the flesh is weak, while the soul is strong; the soul longs while the flesh fears; the soul is firm, the flesh undetermined; the soul hopeful, flesh faithless; the soul happy and the flesh through conflict unhappy.

Grand, *grand* oh soul, are thy instincts, pressing the fainting flesh into the mold of thy destiny; a destiny that the eternal forces of thy soul's structure hath decreed from time unaccountable, and through whose unfolding it shall attain its highest, most perfect self-hood, resting not, until within the bosom of divinity embraced.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOLIDAY PREPARATIONS IN HOMER—MABEL'S AND TOM'S DEVELOPMENT.

Tom kept his promise, and appeared at Mr. Tremaine's hospitable door long enough before Christmas day, to assist in the usual preparations for good cheer, that Mabel and her uncle always attended to, for "the poor they had always with them;" the unfortunate ones whose children were fully alive to the charm and mystery of Christmas eve, and as hopeful for the promised visit of Santa Claus as the children of those able to give unto their own, and perhaps of more true faith, as they take to their beds without having witnessed the least preparation for the distinguished visitor and friend of children, yet determined to go "fast asleep," sure if they obey this injunction so necessary for his approach, that he will not disappoint them.

God sendeth his ministering angels abroad at such times, to reward the sweet belief of childhood, touching the hearts of the able and willing to give, softening the hardening ones of parents, so grown through the toils of life, and opening some door for its accomplishment, even through the agony of heart of a mother's grinding poverty, planning some means,

however trifling, to help the faith and please the hope of a darling child.

“Amid all the rejoicings of Christmas eve and night, Tom, was there ever a chronicle of the tears and anguish of the multitudes, whose whole burden of life seems concentrated in this one day of time?”

“No, Miss Mabel, I fear not: we read once in a while some story of what we are apt to judge is a rare instance of distress and suffering, but we are mostly inclined to believe that all the world is made happy and rejoicing on that day, as well as ourselves, but when we stop to reflect, I presume there is much, and very great, distress in thousands of households.”

Tom was busy making packages of the various collections of articles that Mabel was putting together. Uncle Tremaine stepped out of the room just as Tom was speaking, and since, there had been silence, each absorbed in their own thoughts. Tom was wondering how Mr. Tremaine and Mabel came to think of so much to give happiness to others, and having the thoughts, that they so promptly put them in practice, then wandered back to his own early days, realizing that but for their goodness and thoughtful friendship, he would not have occupied the position he does to-day, in any sense.

Then the strangeness of it all came upon him, his past and his now presence in their home as an invited and honored guest, which thought brought him to the present, and glancing at Mabel he perceived that she had quite forgotten the work before her, while her

hands lay idle on a pretty dress pattern of woolen goods, designed for a little protégé whose poverty put the expectation of anything so nice far from her imagination.

The slight flush, and almost smile, on Mabel's face were the tell-tales of her wandering thought, which was conjuring up the visions in dreams and the delight in reality, when the faggot fire of early morn discovered to the little girl's enchanted eyes, the frock and shoes Santa Claus had actually gotten down the chimney without fleck or soil; and the nuts and candy doll, and real china baby a finger long, stuffed into a little darned-all-over stocking.

The day dream was ended by the return of Mr. Tremaine, but afterwards Mabel's pleasure was complete when told of the child's first ecstasy, and then the silenced tongue, through continued surprise, as she drew the treasures forth, and how the little full heart, turning to mama, could only say, Oh, mama! *I do love* Santa Claus, and finished with great tears of a beautiful joy, fresh, earnest and true. It is a moment of entire gratitude and thankfulness that bringeth the heart-quiver, which can find relief only in tears.

All packages for the late evening's circuit were now complete save one, which was not to be put in a package at all, but carefully placed in a good sized basket, such as jelly and fruit, little relishes, and sweet home-made bread, for, as Tom was told, a poor and very sick woman, which basket was not disposed

of on Christmas eve, but waited for the early dawn of the Christmas morn, when the uncle and niece went out together to the edge of town where stood an old weather worn house, there they halted, and Mabel went in to comfort and bless a poor, suffering one with temporal, as well as spiritual gifts; indeed, what account were one without the other?

Can man pray in fullness of fervor with a starving body? Can his mind grasp or think clearly, on even right and duty, his spirit soar toward Heaven and God, when the tenement of his body is worn and weak, is chilled by cold blasts, hath no internal heat, is hungering and thirsting for food to build the fires of life, which quicken to health the feeble pulse and fainting breath? God knows it cannot be. His own laws decree it otherwise.

Feed and warm the body physical, and then ask the body spiritual dwelling therein to demonstrate its existence more perfectly; starve and freeze the body physical and you have no right to ask, much less expect, else than the feeblest and weakest expression of a moral comprehension. Reader, dost thou guess that Mabel was passing through one of the fires awaiting her life, through which reason and a sense of justice alone could accompany her, compelling to the sacrifice of losing, or endangering the love of accounted friends? Even so, nor think the cross an easy one to bear, for her sensitive soul (it takes a sensitive soul to hear the hungering heart-cries of humanity), felt keenly the thorns that friends (?) placed unten-

derly upon her brow, and the anguish came and was wrestled with in darkness and alone, and accepted by her soul's decree of right and justice, truth and love, prayer and aspiration. And she comes forth in her chosen armor, whispering her own encouragement: "He leadeth me, He holds my hand in His, nor taketh me astray." I will go where He beckons; time will prove that His way is the best, and that at the last it leadeth out "by the still waters, and into green pastures," of a conscience at peace, and in full sympathy with the divine love which hath appointed unto me this sacrifice. Wait my soul for the crown after the cross.

In cities a *crime* (?) of such kind against society's commands, as going down among the fallen, with the purest of motive and purpose, soon spreads in her camp, causing a hasty fluttering of garments too white (?) to be soiled by contact of even a *messenger* from the tombs of despair; defilement is their fear (acknowledgment of weakness?), and no ears have they for the cry of pain, or the voice of repentance that would be heard, in mercy heard.

Then, in a village like Homer, how much quicker does such a fire spread and excite the populace to execration and disgust, and although "Our Mabel" has been beloved and trusted, and no one questions her purity now, yet they add thorn after thorn, and deliberately prick her brow with their pure hands (?) folded behind them, lest some native instinct quicken to a contact with her holy ones.

Even mother Osgood has reasoned with her, her young friends have shed their tears over her, to follow withal the shrugging shoulder and averted eye. Old auntie "Bet" has reasoned, scolded and cried by turns, the wise old soul knowing her pet's worldly loss. One earthly friend alone stands by and upholds her decision through converse with her own soul and God, dear uncle Tremaine.

Quietly he studies the whole situation while giving his countenance, and ponders the results of his own teaching, in the little child he gathered to his heart so many years ago, now grown into womanhood, full of promise and beauty, and to his loving and perceptive eye, in *this hour*, a priestess before the altar of the most High, wielding the censor of forgiveness for repentance, anointing with the oil of peace a returning soul brought hither through the scorching flames of transgression, whose sword the angel of God's law forever wields to drive the souls of His likeness back into the sweats and travails of a narrow way, that opens up at last the vision of a glory everlasting, found through the crucible of knowledge, far, *far* greater than any paradise to which ignorance can attain.

CHAPTER XV.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT HOMER—UNION OF HEARTS.

An old time practice that Mr. Tremaine himself had been instrumental in establishing in Homer, was a general meeting, without distinction of creed or church, of the villagers, for the purpose of uniting their voices in Christmas songs and carols, to begin with an invocation and to end with a blessing, a feature which had become no mean part of the anticipations for the Christmas week.

At the appointed hour, Mr. Tremaine, Mabel and Tom, auntie "Bet" and uncle Sam as well, took their way to the grove chapel, wherefrom the glad voices were to send out their soul music to-day.

"Tom," said Mabel, "you will witness a great change to-day from the gatherings you used to attend both in number and improvement of the singers."

"Uncle, you will know that it is Minnie's sweet voice when you hear, as the chorus dies almost away, a glad spring as of a bird flown in to warble, 'Father, we love thee, and give to thee praise.' You have not heard our new anthem, and I am glad you have not, but am anxious to know how you are going to like it."

“There is no danger but that I shall like it, Mabel, even were the music somewhat inferior, as I am assured, however, it is not, for out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh, so it must be that from out the soul’s fullness and earnest gladness the sweetest music must flow; but we are at the chapel now, and our winter birds are flocking in, in their brightest of plumage.” “Tom you will have to come with me, for Mabel is needed among those merry choristers.”

So separated, Mr. Tremaine led the way to a pew near the altar, where they waited, each in the silence of his own preoccupied thought, until the ministers of each creed had there assembled in a common brotherhood of Christ, not one presuming by virtue of his creed to be greater than another, yet by common consent assigning to the most venerable among them the office of invocator.

As the gray-haired pastor arose and lifted up his hands, young and old bowed before him in attitude of echoing prayer as the uncreedal one passed his lips.

“O God, my God! O God *our* God, O God, the God of all the universe, with all its peoples of every place and tongue, aid us in our being this morning, that our eyes may spiritually see the bright star of promise, and our ears hear the glad anthem from the skies, heralding a Savior unto men. A child has indeed been born unto us, yea a man, yea a God, whose love and power lies manifest in the hearts of men, when thy people unsected, humble and adoring,

can come before Thee this morning and lay their best treasure before Thee—Spirit of Life—*God*, and acknowledge thy guidance, thy love, thy justice and recompense and reconciliation of all things. The ages have brought us up blindly groping through midnight darkness for the God in whose hands a seeking universe might lay their hopes and trust, their best intent, their purest effort, their failures, and their sins, with the full assurance that His divinest order would enclasp them all, and hold secure humanities' own. Thus to-day we do not meet as Jew or Gentile, Catholic or Protestant, but as one common brotherhood, to adore and praise the God of our souls in whatsoever form He appeals to our comprehension individually.

Accept we pray Thee, O God, our God, our praises to-day of uttered and unuttered thought—those of our elder manhood whose feet even now stand on the shores where the rising tide will e'er long sweep their totter over into the great gulf of eternity—of those who are just sipping of the bitter sweets of this earthly life, and above all, those of our innocents, who from their full hearts this day, shall presently shout forth their glad and happy praises to the God of their being, in song and anthem. Great God, and our *dear Father* in one, this day and always be pleased as we praise Thee, to listen, as we love Thee to accept, as we lean on Thee to support, as we trust Thee to direct, and may we all be gathered at last in one fold through Thy mighty love and wisdom, which

we ask by and through thine eternal Godhood. Amen."

"*Amen*" resounded all over the house, an earnest prayer of itself embodied in the one word.

Soon the organ pealed out the old and ever sweet tune of "Antioch," and the congregation united their hearty voices in singing:—

"Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing."

Then came the anthem, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," and it fell to Mabel's part to sing the solo,—

"Thou preparest a table before me, in the presence of mine enemies;"

"Thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over."

The earnest tones of the singer, forgetful of listeners, in the sense of appeal and trust with which she endowed the words, touched the hearts of some who had grieved and wounded her, enough at least to bring a blush to their cheeks, of what?

Then came the glees and carols of the young choristers, filling the hearts of their elders with a joy and happiness undefinable, and a peace with which to finish the hours of that Christmas day.

The benediction then pronounced, in almost silence the people turned to go.

Mr. Tremain heard one old man repeat to himself,

"it *is* good for Christians to meet together"—yes, thought Mr. Tremaine, and that the Holy Ghost should be poured upon them through their mingling magnetisms, emanating from an hour of time when jealousies are laid aside, and hatred and every evil thing, uniting their *loving* thoughts and purest aspirations for the divine, not only above them but within them, fulfilling the law for its descending influence, and receiving its holy baptism,—aye, good friends, is not the Comforter come, sent from the Father, even the *Spirit of Truth* proceeding from the Father? Brethren how long before thy perceptions awaken?

Tom's eager heart made him conscious of impatience at the slow moving throng, and when at last the outer door was gained only to see Mabel escorted by an evident admirer, a fountain was stirred within him of whose existance he had never dreamed, creating in him not only surprise but an almost terror of himself.

Pride of concealment lent the will-power to control himself, and apparently listen to the conversation between Mr. Tremaine and a neighbor walking along with them, an incident for which Tom mentally blessed the said neighbor.

That Mabel might have admirers and perhaps an accepted suitor, had not occurred to Tom any more than he was prepared to make known his own growing feeling toward her. He had recognized his inspiration in her, and had indulged in fancy's bright

dreams as something belonging to a far off future, to be attained through patience, labor and waiting.

This new emotion of startled fear, an imp which hugs to the heart, and pricks it to tears, when its love lies endangered in whole or in part, and rouses resistance to the cause that would rout or submerge its fond hopes.

Poor Auntie "Bet's" "Christmas fixings" were to no great purpose so far as Tom was concerned, for with difficulty he made even the pretense of eating, and was immensely relieved when the "farce" was over and he had escaped remark; but Mabel's escort was there and "of course it was not noticed whether I ate or not," and upon Mr. Tremaine's saying that Tom looked weary, probably from the late hours of the night before, and the early ones of the morning, and kindly advising him to go to his room and rest awhile, his heart bitterly replied, "there is a purpose in it," and when in his room he seriously contemplated the getting of his "things" together, and making some excuse, start back to the city.

But love and pride both knocked too loudly at the door of his heart, with firm entreaty to admit of so rash an act,—one saying, "oh don't, don't leave yet, stay just a little while longer;" the other, "would you show your folly, would you be willing if it is as you suspect, to unmask so entirely your true condition of mind? stay I beseech you and show yourself a man;" so pride and love carried the day, and compelling to quiet, let his reason have sway.

Calmly at last, he said to himself, “look here Tom, you and I have got to have a reckoning, we are about to have a smash up, shall, if we go on in this fast style; let us cool down, and walk quietly and not get so out of breath, with perhaps but the shadow of another racer. We will stop and reason together, and view the ground; we were not prepared for this, were we old fellow? How foolish and dreamy we were, but now comes the question, what is to be done? We had no plan or definite thought Tom, but now in one hour the “Fates” compel us. Must we enter the field and unseat this Hotspur? What will Mr. Tremaine think, and Miss Mabel herself; will they call you a fool, and presumptuous, will they think you’ve enlarged on their kindness and interest, and have taken impertinence in? If Mr. Tremaine was a different man, was a common man indeed, we should fear a misconstruction of your motive and intentions,—but you are a man Tom, an awakened one, I should say, and I should also say, you ought and must have light on this now serious subject. Now what are you going to do?”

“Let us consider”—suitsing action to word, Tom put himself in an attitude of thought, presently the still small voice, monitor of the soul, which ever speaks when men will pause to listen, bade him “possess his soul in patience,” nor let the hot winds of desire and fear, sweep him from out the channel of his good sense and judgment, to decide as yet upon no certain step, to let circumstance and time decide his movements in the after awhile.”

And thus, as he listened, his soberer senses came aboard his tossing ship of being, and calmed the storm which had so suddenly arisen.

When Tom came out again from his seclusion, none but an intuitive perception could have noticed or felt there was aught the matter with him, so well and naturally did he carry himself, although it was hard to keep his balance with unequivocal concern, when Mabel approached him as he entered the room, asking if he was ill, notwithstanding the gentleman aforesaid still invaded the parlor with his presence.

Tom was manly and polite to him, as he tried to consider him favored in Mabel's eyes, and sought to find what worth and virtue she had particularly discovered. Thus occupied, the afternoon wore away to a close sooner than Tom even dreamed, and with it the source of his trouble and woe. A sigh from Mabel, as of relief, caught Tom's quick ears, when the door closed behind their visitor, which most unaccountably cheered and encouraged him.

It was Mabel's turn to be of fitful mood, dropping continually into an absent-mindedness that chagrined her when recalled to herself. The young man just gone was one of the new residents of Homer, and rather an enterprising and worthy young fellow as the world goes. He had been attracted to Mabel from the first of his acquaintance with her, although at a loss often to fully comprehend her. She found in him only an agreeable companion for a short hour, who called forth nothing of her deeper and more responsive nature.

Lately she had been annoyed at his more special attention, too marked for a doubt of his intentions, and with girl-like strategy under such circumstances, had striven hard to ward off the inevitable, when such natures as his determine their plan.

And the crisis had come but a few days before the holiday festivities, and Mabel had met it as best she could, expressing, with her denial of all such hopes as the young man had entertained, her sincere regret and sorrow for anything he might have construed into an encouragement of his suit. So genuine did her regret appear, that he took new courage instead of owning to himself defeat, and bethought him that she might relent, and yet entertain his suit, and thus it came about, his call and stay that afternoon, was to renew it, if opportunity offered. Mabel had not as yet informed her uncle of the affair, and so it happened that the opportunity did occur, which might have been prevented.

Ah! Tom, had you been a little calmer and a little wiser, how much annoyance you might have saved from Mabel, and have kept in abeyance the tumult of your own soul. But so it is, one must learn the lesson through the suffering.

CHAPTER XVI.

DEVELOPED AND REQUITED LOVE.

Several days passed on in the usual manner of Mr. Tremaine's household, only that Tom was more reticent, and more watchful of Mabel's every movement, while she remained unchanged in her manner toward him, too sister-like, he began impatiently, to think, yet gratified that she, apparently, thought no less of him, as he did of himself for his changing moods.

But three more days remained to Tom of his visit, heart and brain had been busy, alike, with an internal conflict, and he had, at last, come to one decision, namely, to have an interview with his kind host, and in all frankness, state to him his case, and so it came about that Tom very quietly asked Mr. Tremaine if he would do him the favor of taking a walk with him, and then repeated what we already know, of the growth of his fancy and his day dreams, and at the last, *reality*; adding an earnest appeal to know if he had aught of blame to give, or if he had been too presumptuous in his friend's estimation, for said he, "I realize, Mr. Tremaine, the great debt I owe you, for had it not been for your goodness to me, as shown by your true friendship in lifting me up, as it were,

when I was a boy, from the ground on which I sat, and have bidden me look about; and for your aid and encouragement further on, to persevere in my progressive path, I should not stand where I do to-day, in any particular. And now in a matter which I know goes right to your heart, I crave your friendship still, and its best advice.

To say that Mr. Tremaine was taken entirely by surprise, would not be strictly true, for accustomed as he was to go beneath the surface of men and things, in discovery of cause, and noting effects, expanding thereby his intuition, he could not fail to catch, in a measure, the tone and tendencies of Tom's expanding heart life.

There was a moment of silence, indeed several of them, anxious ones to Tom, before Mr. Tremaine made any answer, then it was to assure him he could not blame him for his attraction toward his beloved child, nor with his ideas of life, be willing to call him presumptuous, "but further than this I cannot go, for Mabel has been trained to think and act for herself, and she generally does so deliberately, so that I have little fear for her decisions. If she gives you encouragement, then I will say 'God speed,' if not, Tom, you must exercise all your manhood to overcome any other feeling than that of disinterested friendship."

Truth to tell however, Mr. Tremaine thought he had discovered symptoms in Mabel, as well, of a growing attachment, which argued well for Tom,

though he gave no sign, neither any that he himself would be well pleased at a favorable result, as was actually the case.

And so the matter rested until Tom could plead his own suit before "Our Mabel," with what result we have already seen, for it was as Tom's wife that Mabel had called on Jennie, and Tom's children who were so gladdened by their mother's return home.

This year became an important era to another still, the loving, gentle May. She had reached the cross-road of her life to which the finger of her destiny pointed as the path for her to tread, and so with a chosen companion, she cheerfully, happily and hopefully gathered up her heart's forces to journey whither its turnings might lead.

To a city life the first way-mark led, there to establish a home wherein to exercise all the sweets of her trusting nature, and in daily communion with another mind, all her latent power of thought and conception.

A natural and praiseworthy interest asks, what manner of partner May's heart had chosen? Answer comes back, one whose pure and lofty ideas of womanhood makes him reverent of her position and endowments, therefore worthy the boon of her love. Worthy to receive it, and therefore worthy to aid her.

Carleton is the name by which he is known, and the one to which May Osgood now sweetly responds. Mrs. Carleton, May Carleton, though to a city fled, is not where her sister dwells. There her husband, who

is a physician by nature, as by name, returns to his practice among the many who have learned to trust and love his ministrations of healing; let us congratulate him on his happy choice of a help meet for him in his arduous calling.

Mr. and Mrs. Osgood are looking upon the shady side of life, and feel to the utmost the loss from out the old nest of their treasured birdlings, but more especially the flight of May, who had become, since Jennie married away, a supreme source of their comfort and happiness, and had unconsciously leaned upon her more than they were aware, until obliged to part with her. The mansion has a stillness now that afflicts them sorely at times, but in all these changing years the father and mother have grown more and more into each other's lives, as they have pondered more, and discussed, the myriad ways of life—have looked into and imbibed somewhat of their valued friend's ideas and mode of reasoning, much of which sustains and comforts them now in their changed home-life.

One "skeleton" in their closet has also had its influence in cementing more closely their aging lives, the vagueness of a fear, unshapen, but terrible, regarding results of Jennie's marriage. Her visits home had gradually ceased, and letters remained unanswered for a longer time, for both, excuses many were applied, and although the careful wording of these infrequent missives opened no door for inquiry, yet the quick hearts of parental love had

pierced the veil of language, sufficiently to discover a wound of some sort, which did not heal as time passed on.

Mr. Osgood grew restless and almost remorseful, and both he and his wife were, at times, aroused to a horrible fear that they may have too lightly thrown their daughter's happiness into the hands of a comparative stranger, while on the wave of an excitement prompted by her own glowing heart-vision. Time passed on, and Mr. Osgood hearing that Tom Joiner was to remove to the same city where Jennie lived, wrote to Mabel requesting that she see her at the earliest moment convenient, and then inform him how she appeared as to health and happiness.

CHAPTER XVII.

HOME AND LOVE'S FIRESIDE.

In the evening of the day on which Mabel made her visit to Jennie, and after the babies were safely ensconced in bed, she sat down for a quiet chat with Tom, who had already donned his dressing gown and slippers, with which he loved to encase himself, because the work and gift of wifely hands. This hour of the day was the realization of his youthful dreams, his "apples of gold," and "pictures of silver," of whose contemplation and enjoyment he never tired. Daily did his heart throb and swell with thankful joy, for the treasure bestowed upon him of Mabel's love, and the other treasures as fruit of their united lives. Tenderness marked his every act toward her, and a deference born of deep respect, mingled with a faithful love.

Mabel recounted every particular of her visit, and the impressions that it made upon her.

"That something is altogether wrong, Tom, in her married life, I feel quite sure, but how can I write this to Mr. Osgood, when I have nothing definite to state, neither do I like to help on a deception which Jennie has felt compelled to undertake, and yet it may be best to only state, for the present, the facts

concerning her health, or until more light falls upon my comprehension, for I must write, and that soon, as the dear people, no doubt, are already looking for some word from me. Jennie has promised to ride out to our home and bring her children. I imagine it will be a gala day for them, poor things, and she! why, it seems to me that she needs almost everything that money cannot buy, affection, sympathy, tender treatment, yet I may be wrong, and the source of her trouble be something of an entirely different nature, but this is how I feel about her."

"Can't you persuade her, Mabel, to make you a visit of a week or so? I am sure your ministrations will be pleasant to her under any circumstances."

"I shall try, I had thought that when she is spending the day with me I would urge her acceptance of an invitation for a visit of longer duration. How strangely Tom, the lives of individuals turn out; so different too, from what they plan or expect for themselves. Poor Jennie, so full of life, fun and merriment in her girlhood days, is now the very contrast of her former self, a pale, quiet, saddened woman; and the cause, is now the mystery. It must be some disappointment in life, a heart trouble, for all things else she possesses to overflowing, it must be something that money cannot buy, or redress."

"I fear it is, Mabel, how well I remember her on the day of your birthday party, when I, a big awkward fellow, could only approach her with my eyes, so full of gaiety and fun was she, and wonder at the conde-

scension, on her part. What a party that was Mabel, come to think of it, I wonder if Homer ever did have, before or since, another like it. It was the making and beginning of me, your humble servant ma'am, it set me on my feet and told me to go, and keep on going, until I got, where? Why, right here, with my blessed wife and two precious babies, and then to take them along for company, cheer, and life itself.

“But for that party Mabel, love, my darling wife, I should never have held you here in my arms, as I do this minute, nor met the answering look, which tells that you do love your bold and awkward Tom.

“Ah yes, it is strange, all of it strange, true and beautiful.

“I wonder what has become of the many others that were present then, and what effect if any, that afternoon had upon their lives.

“Of one we know, and that, that hour and day made for my Mabel, a devoted and attached friend of Julia Howard, how faithful the tender care of our little ones is daily proof.”

“Yes, Tom, Julia is indeed a faithful and sweet girl, just such an one as little children should have about them. I dread to think I may have to part with her some day, while still I sincerely hope, that she may yet have a loving husband, and a sweet little home of her own, to tend and bless with her loving ministrations.

“It was hard for her to lose parents and home

almost at one blow, but how much harder it could have been, had she not already conceived and put in practice, the idea of supporting herself.

“And when dear uncle Tremaine opened his doors to shelter her, how little did we then dream of what she was to become to me, so sweet and gentle a friend and sympathizer, through every care and sickness. I declare, Tom, we don’t half appreciate people, I do believe if we treated everybody right, we would get at the heart side of natures, oftener than we do.

When an emotion of philanthropy, for instance, comes over us, and we long to do something for our fellow creatures, we begin casting about for some far off, or out of the way mission to perform, entirely overlooking the work that confronts us every day, in phase of familiar faces, and persons and conditions. A lady friend told me once how this desire would frequently come over her, from childhood to her maturer years; that she was always careful not to send any one away from her doors asking for bread, lest unawares she sent some angel forth; that she strove to be kind and thoughtful of her servants, and to do her whole duty toward them and others.

“She had been inspired by this not unusual humane feeling, for some days, and was looking about, wondering what there was for her to do, that was in her power to perform; they had in their employ on their country place, a man of French descent, whose forgetfulness, together with an almost unpardonable negligence of his dress, so irritated her, that she felt no

longer any patience, and had made up her mind to ask her husband to discharge him. She said too, that the man could not see very well out of one eye, but she had never made any inquiry concerning it.

“One morning, as usual, she accompanied her husband in their carriage to the depot, on his way to business in town, this same man driving; being detained a little while in the village, she fell into a contemplative mood, when the desire to be up and doing something, again possessed her; and a saddened feeling beside, that she was utterly unable to do much that she could see ought to be done, and that she would do, did the means lie within her reach.

“Just then she was startled, not by words, not by sound, but an impression as strong as either. ‘The poor ye have always with you.’ ‘Whatsoever thou doest unto the least of these, thou doest unto me.’ ‘Charity beginneth ever at home.’

“Why, thought she, what is it I ought to do and have not done, let me think, and then suddenly, the Frenchman, coming from an errand, caught her eye, and the feeling toward him was coming back, but she checked it, saying to herself, I wonder if it is for him I ought to think and do; I will speak kindly going home, and try to learn more about him.

“Putting the thought into practice, she was greatly surprised to see the man touched to tears, while he exclaimed: ‘Oh ! madam, I know you are often vexed with me because I forget so quick, but indeed madam I try not to, but I cannot remember anything long ever since I had the bullet shot in my head.’

‘Bullet shot?’ she exclaimed, and then he showed an ugly scar just concealed beneath his hair.

“Thus she ascertained, that he had served in war, and was injured for life, that he was entitled to a pension, but did not know how or to whom to appeal, to procure it; also that his poverty was such, that he had no clothing save what was on his back.

“Here was work indeed, and she lost no time in supplying clean clothes from her husband’s cast off garments.

Her husband undertook and succeeded in securing the pension due to the poor man, and when he had no further use for him, found a place for him in a restaurant, where he could earn a living in his legitimate calling, as cook.

“So Tom, our charitable work lies oftenest at our very doors, waiting for us to take it up, while our minds and inclination are looking far beyond, to that which is only to be dreamed of, because out of reach.”

“Yes darling, your friend’s experience is a lesson for us to contemplate, not only, but one to instill upon the hearts of our little ones, in their coming years. O! Mabel, how those precious children do grow into my heart, and they make me yearn for a better manhood in myself, that they may receive from their father what his hand and life should give of pure example and lofty purpose.”

“Yes, Tom, dear, we will strive hard to give to our children their just due, through a constant watchfulness over ourselves in all things, that we may inspire

their young hearts, daily, to an appreciation of the beautiful, true and noble in life."

"Ah, you have it now, Mabel, *inspire*. that is the word."

"Yes, I have always had an idea, or a feeling, that if God ever blessed me with children, I could and would inspire them daily, that it should be my main work in life so to do; and now that I am so blessed the feeling is ten-fold more strong. Our boy manifests, to my great joy, some effect of such efforts already; bless his curly head. Our next neighbor's five-year-old Bessie came up to our front gate this morning quite early, and seeing Tremaine asked him to come over to her house and play with her, he replied:

"'No, I touldn't.'"

"'Why not,'" she asked.

"'Mama wouldn't like it. She told me to stay right here.'"

"'Well, never mind that,' Bessie said, 'Your mama won't care. I often go to places without asking my mama.'"

The little fellow seemed to swell up, almost as big again, as he said:

"'Bessie Felton, I wish I was your mama, and I would teach you it wasn't hon-*honorably*, that's what my mama calls it, to run away from a place where your mama, or papa either, tells you to stay, and I wouldn't, not if she let me stay here all day, and all night, too'—and his big blue eyes filled with tears at the bare thought of being forgotten. "Cause my

mama says, 'now Tremmy you may go in the yard to play, I am going to be *very* busy, and no one will watch you, but I know I can trust you not to go outside the gate,' and does you think I would do it, Bessie Felton? I wouldn't do it, most if God should tell me to."

"Just then Bessie was called home, and started off rather guiltily. Our boy stood still at the gate some moments, but what were his thoughts, we may never know.

"I happened to be passing the window, and noticed that he was looking at something very intently, which he had on a small piece of wood. I started out to see what it was that so interested him, when Bessie came up, and as neither of them saw me, I thought the effect upon both would be better if they did not know of my hearing what had passed."

"Bless my little nobleman, and bless the wondrous love and intuition of his mother's heart."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SKELETON IN JENNIE'S CLOSET IS SEEN BY HARRY.

When Mabel had bidden Jennie good morning, and passed out into the street, the latter with a heavy sigh turned in an absent manner, and entered her spacious parlors; slowly she walked their length, and only halted when the farther wall opposed her, standing incognizant of the fact, or of any beauty that surrounded her, as she gazed at the statuette before her with incomprehension, her senses inert as those of that marble form.

Gradually, however, the image was reported to the returning sense, and as she took it in, she exclaimed: "Ah, yes, fit emblem art thou of my own sad life, chained, and with links as strong as thine, oh, Greek slave. Slave! Yes, I have said it. *Slave*, fettered and chained by will, and force and fashion, and the chains clank and bear so heavily, that when I would but raise my hand in remonstrance, or appeal, they weigh me to the earth again. Oh, Harry! how little do you know of the depths of a woman's awakened heart, while you think and truly believe she should be proud and happy in her golden bonds—and they may seem golden to others, yet how they gall and cut to my soul. O, mother! mother! why did you not tell me

something of the ways of life, something that would have checked the giddy flow of unrestrained girlish spirits, and have caused more earnest thought upon the fatal step in a woman's life, if she knows not herself, or others. Then ! then, perhaps, I could in our first happy days have gotten Harry to think too, and together planned and lived so differently from now. O, Harry ? I *do* love you, with all this galling bitterness, and God grant—" Starting with affright as her voice framed that name, she repeated most solemnly,—“ Yes, God grant, what I do not deserve, through my forgetfulness of His power and presence in all things. Will I mock him now, if I go to him and lay my troubles at His feet, as in my childish days, when I could not sleep until I had said my, ‘Pray the Lord my soul to keep?’ Strange that I should have forgotten. The very thought softens and relieves my heart, that into one ear ever ready to listen to human cries and askings, I may pour my soul’s trouble. Yes, I will find my closet, and will pray daily, and see what God will do for me, who alone *can* do anything.”

Again she turned, and slowly, with this mood of mind upon her, passed out of the room and up to her own apartments.

She did not notice the eyes bent upon her from a shaded alcove in the parlor, nor hear the impatient voice as she passed on exclaim, “ Humph ! that was tragic. Since when, I wonder, has my lady taken it into her head to go upon the stage; or is it some pri-

vate theatrical she is preparing for, but she ought to know that I would never consent for my wife to take part in any such performances. Still, it is strange. What did she mean by saying, 'O, Harry, I love you with all this galling bitterness.' Can she find nothing better than personalities, and must needs drag my name into the performance? No, madam, you've made a mistake in your infatuation. I shall nip this thing in the bud."

Suiting action to word, Jennie's husband started out with a bound, intent upon fulfilling this resolve, and nearing Jennie's dressing room, which he had to pass, (the soft-padded carpet had not echoed his footsteps) he heard her voice, as in tearful but subdued supplication, so that even he dared not intrude upon her now.

"Confound it! what does all this mean; puling tears, 'galling bitterness,' 'clanking though golden chains,' 'fettered by force and will,' 'awakened woman's heart.' *Indeed*, and has it been asleep all this time? And what has opened its sight to behold all these tragic things. Can it be possible! that I may yet have to patronize a lunatic asylum?"

The bare thought brought a reversing wave of feeling, which for the moment swelled within his breast, and brought the puling tears to his own eyes, at the remembrance of the laughing light-hearted girl, whom he took for his bride, while, for the first time, the contrast of a saddened woman, though still gentle and winning, bore down upon him.

Thus for one moment his angel of light had impressed her finger and reversed the action of a heart, most truly alive to the world's advantages of position, wealth and influence, and gave him the first comprehension of the possibility of aught deeper, purer and more satisfying.

It was but for a moment; in that time it had passed away. Yet it was to remain unblotted, down in the casket of experience, though buried and soiled in the dust of time and worldly interest, to spring forth with an electric flash from its magnetic force, when his angel of light should count all of the few beads of his soul's purest thought.

Jennie's husband now decided to be silent on the subject of what he had seen and heard, though sorely puzzled. He had imagined not only that he had an obedient wife, but one to whom, in justice let it be said of him,—he thought he was giving all and everything a wife could want; though exacting in return, implicit and unquestioning obedience to his own desires and thought. How little did he know of himself, or his wifely companion.

O, prayer! beautiful capability of the human soul, gift from the hand of the Almighty, bestowed as a talismanic wand with which to touch the throne, and claim attention of the Source of life, the "All in All," whose assistance and protection is pledged with the gift to mortals, whenever lifted toward Heaven.

Thus to Jennie there came, while yet in the attitude of prayer, swift messengers from life's deep Source,

to burn incense about her form, soothing the stings and cuts of ignorance, and enkindling the faint hope that was seeking but a quiet grave. The right chord was touched, the right spring pressed in Jennie's heart; and thus the daily panoramic views of retrospection that passed before the eye of memory, served truly, in impressing their needed lessons upon her being.

But this awakening, and gradual perception of her own needs and capabilities was not to end the inward struggles of her heart, for in proportion to growth interiorly is the spirit cognizant of inappreciation, want of sympathy, uncongenial tastes, where it was slightly noticed before. Like a terrible nightmare of startling visions, came frightening phantoms that a fettered life had bound her to, unless with her, the husband could grow to change.

O, ye happily mated ones, start not, neither shun those whose fate is less happy, whose hearts are as yearning, and perhaps more yearning than yours; as capable of the highest appreciation of love and life, yet doomed through ignorance, or mistake, their own, or others, to wear chains that not only unfit them for this life of probation, but hangs the head so low, and crushes the spirit so deep, that often no seraph wings can grow, to plume themselves for a flight to Heaven, when earthly scenes are done. But if, through the purging fires at last, they *do* reach that future goal; may not the Almighty place a more glittering crown upon the brows of the more tempted,

more suffering ones, than upon those who have passed this earthly sphere, *good* because less tempted and tried, saintly, because of less keen sensibilities, or the blessings bestowed by worthy and good progenitors?

According to promise, Jennie, with her two children, drove out to Mabel's residence one balmy day, where the little ones were made wild with delight and astonishment at the, to them, new beauties of garden and orchard, and little Tremaine was made to feel his importance as host, while answering their questions on matters in which he was quite at home.

Meanwhile, Mabel and Jennie had broken much of the ice formed by time, distance, and non-intercourse during the past few years, and Jennie was really beginning to feel more like her former self, and occasionally a flow of impulse so tingled her veins, as to render it almost impossible for her to resist a deeper confidence than had as yet passed between them.

Before the day was passed, Jennie's promise had been given, for another and longer visit, some weeks later, for herself and little ones.

When she had gone, Mabel sat down and thus wrote to her Uncle Tremaine:

“DEAR, *Dear Uncle*:

How I do want to see you, and have you near me always, but more especially now. I want your inspiration, your wisdom, your love, to work their wonders of peace and quiet, not only in my own soul, but in another's, and that other, our friend Jennie, of whom I have already written you.

“She has been out to our little nest with her poor,

starved babies; starved for want of healthy pure air, and freedom of limb, and they all seemed not only pleased with the change, but benefitted by the relaxation from mere elegance and propriety. Jennie has promised to come again for a visit of several days, and I am so glad that you are to be with me then. Perhaps, if she thought to meet you, she would shrink, as she does from all thought in connection with her home and its past, and yet, once met, I feel sure that she will be glad at last, and the closed springs of her nature will again flow out in ripples that will gain in their silvery tones, as thought and a truer life assert their sway. O, my dear uncle, what a strange world is this. My heart aches—aches, when I look about me and read, in almost every life, a sorrow through some apparent wrong, and dared I judge of this apparentness in considering the miseries of the world, my own soul could not withhold the question of God's justice toward those whom His hand hath created. But thanks to your teaching, I feel that what, thoughtlessly, we would condemn as injustice, is in truth but God's eternal justice, purchased through exact fulfillment of all His laws, and that through afflictions are we taught the design of His laws, which are perfect and unchangeable.

“Fulfilling those laws intended for our health and happiness, though restraining, we are given health; disobeying which, we stumble upon others as inexorable, which bring in our misery; is this not so, dear uncle? O, there is so much I want your thought about, that I count the days and hours to your coming. Prepare yourself for renewed entreaties and arguments to remain with us always. Perhaps, and I will hope it, that the tendrils on our household vine, will so cling and wind themselves about you, that you cannot tear away and leave them broken and bleeding. Our boy

is after your own heart I know, and you will be surprised at the change in the little fellow, in the few months since you saw him, and the baby May is no end of delight.

“Tom, as you have probably heard from his own pen, is doing very well for the length of time we have been here. I prophesy a fair success for him, for I know that the esteem of the business men with whom he comes in contact, cannot fail to be his.

“As a general thing, Tom leaves all thoughts of business at his office, and our evenings are an anticipated delight, through the day, to us both. Then we read together and moralize; and bring in your imagined opinion no little. Two or three questions we have saved up to get your opinion upon, to see which, if either of us, is right. But we have promised there shall be no war in our heaven, or matter to create one, should either come out victorious.

I must end this epistle, for there comes Tom up the garden walk, who is very, very late, to my great disappointment, because he has missed seeing Jennie, and because he has not so comfortable a dinner as he might have had with us. Now, you see he did not come up to the law which declares, that dinner just done and immediately served, is the best, consequently must abide by the next in order, which bids him take, and suffer, that which is not quite so good through keeping, but better than none at all; which would have been his lot had he not obeyed the law making it necessary to come after it. Enough. I must away. You see how matter of fact I am. Won’t I make a philosopher some day? Aye, of *my boy*, I hope.

Your own loving child,
MABEL ——.”

CHAPTER XIX.

JENNIE'S SECOND VISIT TO MABEL—UNCLE TREMAINE.

But Time rolls evenly and heedlessly on through daylight and darkness, sunshine and cloud, nor hastens nor slackens his speed for sorrows that crush, for burdens that are heavy, for joy's happy wing, or for love's strong appeal.

O, relentless Time, stern master of worlds, how many altars have ye builded, how many stricken down, how many hearts have ye lightened and blessed, how many laid low in the dust, or impressed with dark fears of vaguest unrest, in your going yet ever coming of that space in our reckoning, “*a few weeks*,” between the first visit of our friend Jennie, to the *now*, as we find her, seemingly content and more happy at the close of the third day of her promised long visit.

Jennie and Mabel with work in their hands had been sitting for a few moments in silence, if the vivid action of thought, may be deemed silence—when Jennie exclaimed, “O, Mabel what a good, good uncle is yours, I feel as if I could lay bare my whole heart if need be, (thus wordily hiding the need) and feel that he could not only understand, but have charity for a body's short comings or misconceptions, and really then, think no less of them for his discoveries.”

“Yes, Jennie, there is no kinder, truer, genuinely charitable being living, than my best beloved uncle, and he would, and does as you say, think no less of people for their faults when he knows them—and he has very clear perceptions of the character of men—because his philosophy teaches him that their expression is the legitimate fulfilment of the laws of heredity and also of education, through surrounding influences and teaching; the first, seldom overcome or modified much, through ignorance of cause, and for the latter ‘believeth and hopeth all things.’ Believing, as he does, in the truth of God’s divinity, which Christ gave in words, that like unto a ‘tinkling cymbal’ is all other virtues, compared with that of Charity, which also He said, would cover a ‘multitude of sins.’ How little is the true meaning of Charity understood, or practiced in the world, at least its meaning as it appears to me, through my uncle’s spectacles perhaps, but it does seem to me that the words, ‘Charity’ and “Know thyself,” should constantly ring in everybody’s ears, demanding a hearing, until the inner man, the soul, takes cognizance and seeks to find if there be any breadth, height or depth to the meaning their speech can or should convey.”

“You and your dear uncle put things in such a new light Mabel, so different you seem to think of even the commonest things to what most people do, and yet when one thinks of it, reasonable enough to be true.” And Jennie drew a long sigh, as she continued, saying:

“What a different world this would be, if everybody could believe and think and do after the manner of such thought, everybody would be forgiven everything, everybody would be kind to everybody, pitying their weaknesses of inheritance, and helping to out-grow those of education and condition. Why! Mabel, that would be Heaven on earth.”

“Yes, Jennie, at least a glimpse of it. Still under those conditions of true charity, remember there would be much, very much, for all beings to suffer, in the manifestations of imperfect humanity, through fulfillment of these stern hereditary laws, and those, almost as binding, of condition, unpleasant for even friends to bear, though they recognize the cause, and to bear it well, ‘suffer long and be kind,’ would have to count it glory unto God, to suffer and be patient, while awaiting a farther Heaven just in view, where physical disabilities shall no longer afflict the indwelling spirit, clipping the wings of aspiration, ever struggling for a higher flight.”

“How earnest you grow Mabel. I cannot help thinking just at this moment, of some ladies I know and wondering how much of interest they would feel in a conversation like this, though I have seen them quite as earnestly discuss the newest fashions.”

“I cannot help it Jennie, I do get ‘fired up’ sometimes, when thought on such subjects, has full swing, but here comes uncle, who speaks more coolly, a philosopher of the right stamp; hey, uncle?”

Mr. Tremaine only catching the last sentence,

replied, "There are many right philosophers and many kinds. Which could you name *The Right*?"

"There; take a kiss for your question. *The right* is my uncle, of *course*."

"Care, care, Mabel, no bigotry in our school you know."

"Only save that of love, good uncle."

"Well, well, then here will I reign, philosopher or what not, so my loving subjects shall be well pleased."

"Then this loving subject, begs that you entertain another faithful one, while she is necessarily absent awhile."

"What a winning way Mabel has over people! Even you seem compelled to yield most gracefully, Mr. Tremaine."

"Yes, Mabel is a dear child to me, and her exactions are always my pleasure, ripe with good judgment as they are, and above all, a tender love. God bless her always."

It was an unusual sight, tears in the good man's eyes, but the fulfillment of his hopes and teaching, in Mabel, together with her ever fresh and thoughtful love, whose contemplation moved him now, and often, as the days and years wafted him nearer, and still nearer, to the eternal shore.

Willing he was, to stay and do his appointed work, and he loved to bask in the sunlight of his Mabel's love, and yet in hours of weakening physical life, his spirit looked forward with a yearning unspeakable, toward the vision of the glorified loves, that stood beckoning

him to join in their song, and their work of eternal progression, through spheres of love and knowledge, unending.

Mr. Tremaine being recalled to himself after a few moments in the vestibule of silence, where thought had led him, returned to the outer doors of speech, saying, "but this is not fulfilling my mission of entertainment."

"What can I do, or say Madame Jennie for that purpose, or will an old man's silence attain it better?"

"O! no, no, Mr. Tremaine, I wish you would talk to me just as you do to Mabel. I wish you were my uncle too, it would be such a privilege to have an uncle to go to for advice and strength."

Jennie spoke with so much excitement, that for an instant, Mr. Tremaine looked upon her with surprise, which, however, she did not observe, in the sudden fear that had overtaken her, for her unwonted speech, which her caution revealed as expressing more plainly than intended, her inmost longing and loneliness of soul.

Another moment reassured her, however, for Mr. Tremaine in kindest sympathy of manner, said:

"Jennie you have known me since you were quite a little girl, and I cannot doubt you when you say you would like to have in me a friend such as you could confide in; for the love I bear to you, and the added love and respect I have for your father and mother, (Jennie winced a little here) I will be an uncle to you in good faith, and if you like, you can call me so."

“Do you mean it, indeed, Mr. Tremaine?”

“Certainly Jennie, I mean it indeed, but first look into your own heart, and see if you mean it indeed, for remember if I treat you as I have always treated Mabel, I shall not be satisfied with but the name alone. I must know the heart, and its impulses to perform what I have always felt and claimed to be the duty, of even an uncle.” “Are you still desirous for my kind of uncleship?”

“Let me think a moment—but Mr. Tremaine when you come to know me better with my many faults will you, can you still love me and respect me as worthy your attention?”

“Jennie! who is ‘without sin’ in this world? Nay, your very argument would plead your case more strongly, and become my own.”

Before Jennie’s visit was over, she had communicated in an indistinct manner, so far as words were concerned, the tumult of her soul, and its cause, which the reader has already comprehended, as an awakened desire, or effort of the soul, to be up and doing, and at its legitimate work of growth, which perhaps, had still slumbered on in the full enjoyment of physical pleasures, unknowing the counterpart of spirit, because embryotic, and motionless, save for her early acquaintance with Mabel and Mr. Tremaine.

But the seed was sown, being in good natural soil it had to germinate, and ‘in continuance being formed’ demanded more sunshine, and caressing winds to perfect its struggling growth. Struggling

growth, ah, this is what Mr. Tremaine saw, and strove tenderly to nourish, strengthen and protect the feeble plant.

Another seed, of another kind, had been let fall by its side, whose outer encrustation, forbade its germination as soon, and it grieved the little plant that its companion moved not, and that each day's expansion of its own germ life, was taking it farther away from this companion, that had rested beside her so long, yet not in the least understanding, how it was.

What can one do, what could Mr. Tremaine do, comprehending all the difficulties, a thousand times multiplied by the relations of life, but simply to soothe, and heal, by becoming a human salve, the ingredients of which, must be judiciously proportioned to the individual case, of caution, love and frankness, in equal parts, sympathy, tender touch of wounded parts, judgment, magnanimity, hope, spoken words, and sometimes silence; but ah, difficult to compound, and under some circumstances, difficult for mortals to become possessed of some of the ingredients.

So many wounds never heal entire, and many again, grow putrid and deeper, through every attempt to eradicate the disease, by willing, though ignorant hands.

CHAPTER XX.

JENNIE'S AND HARRY'S EXPERIENCES IN LIFE'S BOOK.

Mabel and her uncle made a compromise, at length, she, promising to spend the summer months at Homer, and he, to divide the remaining time with her, this, he said, was the best he could do, and probably also the best for Mabel's individuality, and so settled the matter.

During his stay with Mabel, Mr. Tremaine often visited Jennie, becoming acquainted with her husband, who, as everybody else did, took a wonderful fancy to his wife's early friend; whose quiet influence soothed, rather than irritated him, and insisted upon making Mr. Tremaine an honored and welcome guest.

Under Mr. Tremaine's guidance, Jennie began to look about for the duties he assured her were lying around her home, only awaiting her hand and touch.

Gradually her inner sight was opened, first to one duty and then another, such as appertain to the homes of either culture or poverty, where young immortal souls are placed for parents to minister to, whose unfolding spirits need the love and finger of the lower angels, *their parents*; whose other hand while leading God's little ones, should be placed in those of them who are a little higher in His kingdom, whose eye and hand

are enchain'd and clasped by the next in the great link of His ministering ones, which, reaching up to His divine presence, so touch His heart with their strong appeal for saving love and wisdom, that "before the word is spoken," His divineness and unspeakable love has thrilled every link of that Heaven-forged chain, tempering the current as it passes, until, when reaching the earth born, his soul may receive that which he could not "see with his eyes, and live."

And that which God imposes as a duty of love, in return for His, is to take the tender hands and point them upward to His throne in recognition of His unspeakable love, which, through the lips of His messenger to earth, He expressed, with a burst of parental fondness and desire, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not!" *Forbid them not;* aye, by tending the good and checking the evil, with the beautiful wand of a pure love, sympathy and forgiveness, whose inspiration will yield the quickest confidence, and lead the faith.

In this work of love Jennie found much employment, and a deeper study than any she had ever taken up, which, in the process of time, expanded her mind to a yet fuller comprehension of the divine mysteries of life. Then, books became a necessity in her desire to glean the thoughts of others, and compare them with her own, so that in time she collected quite a library of solid character, very different from the few fancy volumes on her parlor tables.

The change in Jennie, who was growing to express

and live her thoughts, aroused, not only the wonder, but admiration of her husband. His home began to attract him, even beyond his will, and an occasional evening with his wife and children, now became admitted to his mind, as the pleasantest of all, and yet, its secret he was not able to divine. The change had been so gradual, and yet complete, from his palace in its cold array, to the cheerful, bright and inviting home, in which his wife waited to meet him, and his children full of sweetness, to caress him; often his old impetuous boyishness returned to him under these home influences, and he would proclaim himself still a victim to Jennie's "bright eyes," which, he said, had first enthralled him, when the brightness would indeed come, and her heart uttered its thankfulness that her husband's life seemed to be growing nearer to her own, and the hope might not be vain, that at last, they should think and grow together, and he to appreciate a wife as something more than a doll for man's pleasure and petting.

In her inmost heart, Jennie blessed Mr. Tremaine, as her angel of guidance to this result, for in one of his more familiar talks, after seeing and judging for himself, concerning matters affecting Jennie, and her own expressed longings and misunderstandings, he had said, as he placed his hand upon her head, "let me say one word to you my little girl:—strive hard to speak no hasty word, and ever seek to excuse it in your husband; cultivate happy, loving and trusting thoughts about him, such as you would give your ideal,

and learn to act toward him, as if he were, together with this, make your beautiful home, warmly attractive, as if bright cheery hearts lived in it, and train your little ones to watch for and delight in his coming, and my word for it little woman, you will accomplish more in one year than in ten of argument, or wordy enticements, and meantime you are training yourself to sustain this relation of a loving wife and a thoughtful, tender mother."

"One thing more, my daughter, I know that your heart's need has led you to your secret chamber to call upon that Father who has thus bidden you to do, and who hears and answers the secret prayer; forsake not this shrine, remembering, that 'these things come not forth, save by fasting and prayer.'"

Mr. Tremaine, believing in Jennie's earnestness, and intention to strive patiently for the goal set before her, determined to quiet her parent's fears, which Jennie aided by writing loving and dutiful letters, and promising at no far future day, a visit to the old homestead when "Harry can come with us," thus gaining time for at least a beginning of her work with herself and home, which would bring more of health and life, to her heretofore spiritless face, with which to greet the fondness of her lonely and oftentimes unhappy parents, because that the lone star which had shone with such splendor in their heavenly arch, was apparently setting far below the horizon of their vision.

* * * * *

Many people had Mr. Tremaine known, and many heart histories were stored in the unenterable vault of his strong breast, placed there by those who needed safety, and yet expression.

He had striven hard to lighten the loads of grief, anxiety, fear, hopelessness, indifference, misunderstandings, *all*, and often was his labor rewarded, but oftener still, it seemed to him, that he in person was but the burial vault, and the mourner, the telling headstone of the passed away.

See him now in his old study at Homer, where no intrusions are permitted to come, he has been sitting in his accustomed place, while in long procession much of the past has filed in review before him, and some such thought has actualized itself within his brain, but now with folded hands behind him, he walks the floor, back and forth, back and forth as he thus soliloquizes:

“Yes, yes! here it is on every side, from beginning to end a labyrinthian whole, with seemingly, no beginning nor ending, so far as human eye can reach the underlying causes, and their urgent reform.”

For a moment his brows were knit, and his face saddened, but *truth* is swift, and its messengers shall quickly bring its glory down to waiting, asking souls, whose aspiration is for light, more light; and thus it glided in upon his soul a distinct impression, to which his voice gave utterance, “Yea, God’s truths are manifested throughout the universe in unchanging laws, whose knowledge shall spread and attune the

souls of men to their spirit, whose source, whose indwelling light, whose life is God; yea, God himself in the personation of the universe, within every living thing, in every breath of life, and every sleeping thing, or inanimate, to the common senses of mankind.

Yea, verily God hath ascended to dwell in suns and moons, and stars, and in every lesser light, hath descended into every lower thing, to hells which men have so named, to the worthless and cast off of earth's children, and there declarereth, that His power and love shines forth the brightest, as unfolding the ragged garments, He strips them one by one from off the crouching form, and letting in the warmer light, from still a shadowed sun, lets break a little more of day with each returning hour, binding strength and comeliness upon the tired and worn, poor and stricken limbs, all laden with the filth before of "sins" and "evils" which have reaped the world's bitter scoffing; commands the soul stand forth in the new light of day, and test the glorious truth of "salvation" through the God of law.

Yea, laws of God, yea, the divine essence of God Himself. Law and love, one in both, both in one. The ruler, the lover, the chastener, the rewarder, the afflicter, the comforter, the forgiver, that the godhood of *man* may at last stand revealed and clothed upon with its own divine light and wisdom, as a *part* of the cause and effect, a drop from the fountain, a scintillation from the Central Light, without which, that which

we term God, would be incomplete because lacking in part. God lives, and is true; truth is God; law is God and God is in and over all, embracing to the utmost atom, existence of every kind and degree.

CHAPTER XXI.

REUNION OF THE OSGOOD FAMILY—MABEL AT HOME AGAIN—DEATH OF UNCLE TREMAINE.

Early in the summer following Mr. Tremaine's visit to Mabel, many letters passed to and fro, the result of which proved to be, after all the pros and cons, that there should be a family meeting at the Osgood mansion. May, accompanied by Dr. Carleton,—who could stay but a day or two, when he must return to his patients—and Jennie with her husband and children were to arrive on the same day. Imagination can picture the change indoors at the Osgood home; the excitement of the good mother, and the bustle she caused for sake of the dear children who were coming to soothe her lone, sore heart. The bitter past was to be buried, and a new past revealed, with its fresher and sweet memories, to be made from out of the immediate future.

“It will bless my old age, father,” said Mrs. Osgood to her husband, as at the twilighting they sat together, “to have our girls at home once more. How beautiful their letters have been, and how anxious they seem to be, to return once more to their parents’ nest. And, oh, how sad I have often been that they ever left it. And now it seems like a dream to try to realize, that they will indeed, soon be here. My

heart fails me often, in my preparations, from the fear that suddenly seizes me, that they may not reach us after all; but, George, have you everything in readiness about the carriage, and the new harness, is it done? John must do his most careful driving, while May and Jennie and the babies are here,—dear little things. I do wonder if they really look like their pictures? I hope they do, and I hope they don't, for pretty they are, but, somehow, there is a want of liveliness of expression that I would rather see. O! did you succeed in getting that fine cow you were after? You did? I am delighted. Those precious children, I don't suppose they get a drop of rich pure milk in the city; how they will enjoy it here, and they shall have plenty, too. Think, husband, when Jennie and May were just such little tots as Jennie's children now are, and so short a time ago; how little we thought that so soon she would have two of her own,—bless her; and she knows now, what a wife's and a mother's feelings are. Poor child! Somehow I feel that she has suffered more than many, and that her wifely pride has kept it from us, who would have sympathized, and could have gone nearer to her than any others. Ah, well, it is all so strange; ours but not ours, either. George, you must manage to take considerable time out of your busy life, to devote to Jennie's husband, as you know he wrote that he was fond of all outdoor sports."

“Yes, wife, I will manage it somehow, and—”

“Oh, husband! you have forgotten all about the

girls' old playhouse, for Jennie's children to play in. You know you were going to make it look as sweet as possible. We must attend to that, right away, and the swing, too. May, dear child, how fond she used to be of sitting in the old swing with her book in her hand, either studying or reading. What a sweet comfort she was to us always, but more after Jennie left us, when she seemed more loving and attentive than ever. Sometimes she would smooth my hair back so softly with her delicate hands, and say, 'dear mother, don't grieve so much for Jennie, she is yours still, and you have me to stay with you.' Thoughtless girl ! She little dreamed then that a gallant knight was soon to claim her for his own, and transplant even her sweet self from out her mother's home, and leave us more desolate than ever. How mysterious it all seems; change, change, and separation after separation, when, if possible, our hearts are more closely knit, our love much stronger. Is it to wean us and make us more willing for the last change on earth? but how can it? You may say what you please, everybody, but I *know* that you may put me under the sod and press it down, down, *down*, and I shall not be quiet even there, if I may not love, and continue to love my children still."

The intervention of a long sob, gave Mr. Osgood the opportunity to speak, and coming closer to his wife, took her hand, and smoothing her brow, gently said, "my precious wife, let us leave the past, and the future, that death's change brings to us, and only

think of the present. But a few days now, and our treasures will be at home, and shall we not enjoy them all the more because of their absence awhile? and everything connected with their stay, with a keener relish than we should otherwise have done?"

The beaming face and busy air of old 'Auntie Bet,' as she wielded broom and duster, opened doors and windows, hung and adjusted snow-white curtains, betokened the advent at Mr. Tremaine's cottage of Tom, Mabel and children.

The appointed day at last arrived, and with its early morning, the two families of Mabel and Jennie. Later in the day, came Dr. and Mrs. Carleton.

Devoted entirely to pleasure must be the first three days, for at the expiration of that time, both Tom and the doctor must return to duty, and to this end Mr. Tremaine and his now increased family, must be constantly on hand at the Osgood home, for the rides, walks and picnicing, that in that space of time took place.

Afterward, the summering party visited more quietly, enjoying daily, a meeting of some sort, and coming into the inner lives of each other, aroused a new and more lasting interest in one another for the future.

It was a new phase of life for dear Mother Osgood, to be taken in by these girls and made as one of them, for they would not lose her out of their sight, and talked of all their matters of love and interest, in her presence, and in pretense of forgetfulness of her dignity, would often catch and waltz her around the

room, while the cap strings would fly, and astonished pleasure beam from the dear lady's face.

The inspiration of those hours and days so renewed the saddened mother, that in spite of all things, she found herself one with her girls, and young once more; a more delightful experience than ever any hope of hers had dared to dream. Their trust, and tenderness of appreciation, seemed sweeter to her soul, than all that had gone before.

Mr. Osgood, filled with a merry glow, romped with his girls again, to the amazement and delight of the little ones, and with no check from the smiling mother. Truly it was a happy household. But joy and happiness, are they ever unblemished by contrast, or something in shape of fear? No, not even in this instance, was pleasure unalloyed, in either Mr. Osgood's family, or that of Mr. Tremaine.

The gentle May was very drooping, a fact quickly noted by loving eyes, through all her efforts to be entirely herself, and though the time was quickly approaching, they wished it nearer, for her husband to rejoin her and remain for a while at the homestead, in the hope that May would brighten again, through his tender offices of love.

“Our Mabel” had a deeper fear settling down upon her heart, and increasing day by day, as she became positive that a change in her dearly loved uncle was not the fancied creature of her brain, as she at first had tried to believe, but that his step was indeed growing more and more feeble, that at the twilight hour he

sought to be undisturbed, and while talking with Mabel, which he still loved to do, unconscious to his memory, he would in the midst of conversation, allow his lips to become sealed and wander off to the realms where thought had led him. He talked to Mabel more, too, of his youth and its hopes than he had ever done, and of she "who could only join herself to him by the rights of Heaven," that he knew she was waiting to see him enter the "pearly gates" to solemnize a union God himself had ordained. Then, at times, his affection for humanity, and sympathy for its suffering, would be the burden of his lips, and his heart grew big enough to enclasp them all, and his arms, were they strong enough, would have protected. Yet he never spoke of dying, and if he realized the fact of such a change for himself, Mabel thought that no idea of physical death occurred to him, and that in spirit he was already, almost on the other side of life. He had often said when a younger man, that when dissolution approached him, he wanted to have no care or thought about worldly matters, but be able to give himself up fully to anticipations of pleasure, at stepping aloft; that to the physical disrobing he should never give a thought, for it had no place in his mind as a condition of dread.

Mabel devoted herself in a quiet, unobtrusive manner to Mr. Tremaine, favoring always his unexpressed inclinations; never breathing in any way, her sorrow and fear, though she longed for something from him as to his real state of mind, whether he himself real-

ized that he might be nearing death's door. His mind remained clear upon all temporal things, when aroused to them, and he played with, and seemingly enjoyed the pranks of Mabel's children at times, but his usual mood was a most surpassing passivity of soul. Mr. Osgood dropped in daily, with apparent purpose of seeing Mabel, but in reality to see as much of his old friend as possible, for it grieved him sore to think that the dear man that he had loved so long and well, was passing daily away; was receding from the stage of life, and before whom its curtain soon must fall.

The autumn had come, and thoughts of return to their several homes was in the minds of all, but none could speak them. The course of events decides our times and seasons; a power greater than our planning, overrules and directs the human will.

Dr. Carleton arrived as expected, and was grieved to see the change in his wife, for she had not written the full extent of her weakness; however she brightened so much in his presence, that the hearts of all were gladdened.

Meanwhile Mr. Tremaine gradually failed in strength, either sitting or reclining all the time. He had not walked about for several days, not even on the piazza which he so loved to pace at eventide. Often would he smile, as with eyes closed, he reclined upon the old-fashioned lounge of the sitting room, when Mabel knew he was not asleep, and then would she almost determine to speak, but as often her heart

failed her. But the day came at last when he unsealed his lips and called her to his side, with, "Mabel, my precious child, do you know that I am about to journey from you into another land? Nay, nay, my child, you must not weep, but talk with me as quietly and sensibly as you so well know how to do. You will miss me in your earthly vision, true, but the uncle who has so fondly loved you, his child, his precious child, will not forsake you even then, for I feel that part of my duty and work in another sphere will be still to minister to some on earth; a beautiful mission God has given to His children, to make them the 'cup bearers' of His bounty and blessings.

"Oh, Mabel, it is all so beautiful, as I contemplate it; this life with its seeming evils, and its sequel just beyond, where the insight is given to man to review his past on earth, and follow out the trains of action from the first impelling purpose, to their result both here and above, compelling his exclamation of justice in God, and ignorance of man.

"But, darling, the higher plane will repay for all the suffering here, even to souls darkened by sin, for there the light can quicker penetrate the clouds, and the angels of light and peace, more fully cast their beams upon them, to rouse and cause them to sensate their dormant condition. Then how lovely and beautiful the scenes and work for those who have striven their utmost here to learn of God, His works and ways!"

"Of late, Mabel, my physical vision has often left

me, and instead, my interior sight has caught beautiful visions of the beyond, and I have been shown, as it seems to me, much that we have to do; the pleasures to be enjoyed, and how we prepare 'our mansions' there, by the living *here*: so real is it all, I feel confident that when the cloak drops from off my spirit form, I shall meet familiar faces, and feel at home in my new surroundings."

The good man dropped into silence, and seemed to be already transported; but Mabel recalled his roving spirit, to ask, if in these moments his spirit bride attended him, or came forth to greet him. How his eye enkindled, and what a glow covered his cheek, as with a quicker motion than for many days, he arose to a sitting posture.

"Have I seen her, Mabel? Oh, that glorious vision of beauty and light! Compared in brightness is the noon-day sun a *shadow*, in tenderness, love and beauty, the enticements of earth are as *nothing*; oh, I cannot speak of it. I wish I could; but, Mabel, the sacrifice of a lonely life, ten-thousand fold, were worth, even the vision, of my heart's long-absent love. How long, O, God, how long."

Fear seized Mabel's heart lest the doors now so far "ajar" had indeed opened wide for the waiting spirit, which would have fled with delight; but no, it was a faint, that laid him back upon his pillows, after which he did not attempt to speak.

He retired early that night, but late in the evening, Mabel, who was sitting where she could hear every sound, heard her name called, and went to his side.

“Mabel can you watch with me an hour, and sing in your low sweet way, any song of praise or angel song you know? It will make my new birth easy and sweet, for Mabel, this night, I know I shall be born again; born, thank God, my father, into spirit life, to know more of Him, and his demands of me, His loving son. You will not weep, darling, but try to realize with me, the blessing that is upon me, of this beautiful change, for it is beautiful, and I do not dread it; dread it not for me. Send for Mr. Osgood, I would have my good friend with you, and with me in this hour, then return, Mabel darling and sing to me.”

The message sent, Mabel began with a trembling voice, feeling overruling her determination to be calm, when Mr. Tremaine spoke, saying, “Sing on, the angels will give you strength.”

Control at last came to her, and the midnight music was sweet to hear. Suddenly she was startled, and Mr. Tremaine seemed to listen, as sob after sob was heard from without the door. “Poor Auntie Bet; let her come in. Dear soul, why are you weeping? Not for me, when you must know how happy I am that my work is done, and that I am to begin another life above. Tears distress me; be thankful with me.”

The entrance of Mr. Osgood ended this scene, and Auntie Bet retired, still sobbing, to the far part of the room, for she would not “leave the house whar ole marsa is dying” and, besought by Mabel, tried to be still.

Mr. Osgood clasped hands with Mr. Tremaine, and

looking into each others' eyes without speech, they seemed for one moment to converse in spirit. Mr. Tremaine was the first to speak, and said: "Brother, I wanted you to be with me in this hour of dismantling the spirit of this worn-out physical covering; temporal matters I put into your hands—some time—ago—now let us—think only—of—the—be—yond."

Another faint, from which the spirit rallied, though it weakened much its clinging flesh.

Mabel sang again.

Mr. Osgood, bowed down with grief and awe, forgot, for the time being, the agonies of pain experienced in another chamber at his own home, where a little spirit was striving for birth into this mortal sphere.

Mabel's singing, and the hush of night, had lulled her uncle into a quiet sleep from which he shortly awoke, unrefreshed and weaker still. Not attempting to speak, he looked toward Mabel, and raised his hand as if to take her own. Instantly she clasped the hand, whose patting caresses from her youth up, cherished in memory so lovingly, now with more vividness returned, as for the last time she held that hand from which the life was fast receding, as death congealed its coursing blood.

Mr. Osgood had taken his dying friend's other hand. Again the eyes were closed and his breath came softly, when soon he said: "Sing, 'Our Mabel,' sing 'Beautiful Life.'" As best it could, her voice threaded its way through his favorite hymn:

“ Oh, life, beautiful life!
Thy glories unveiled I see;
Oh, life, beautiful life!
That the angel of death brought me,
Thou hast made me one of the noble,
Thou hast made me one of the free,
Oh, life, beautiful life!
I sail on thy crystal sea.”

Quick the motion that disengaged his hands and caused the attempt to rise, only to fall upon his pillow, and pointing above him to exclaim: “ See! they come, winding down the corridors of heaven, they come! Listen! That music; do you hear it? The hosts of heaven must be singing praise,—and,—oh! there, there, brightest of them all! she calls me; she holds out her arms. May I go; can I go, Mabel?” and the tired body fell back weeping. “ Is it time, indeed; is my work done? Can I go, Mabel?”

Through a grief whose intensity had now sealed the fountain of tears, Mabel smoothed her uncle’s brow and gently soothed his mind, so clear to the last, with, “ Yes, uncle, dear, it is time now. They call you for you are ready, and your Mabel says, yes, yes, go to your loved-one’s arms.”

“ Bless you, bless you, sweet child, it is time, and I am going. I see plainer now, and they whisper so sweetly! Osgood, friend, look at me.”

“ Yes, here I am.”

“ But I do not see you.” His voice was dying to a whisper, as he continued:

“ Can the veil be already fallen? Tell them all—my

friends—good bye. Ma—bel—bless Tom—and the children. I hoped—see him."

One gasp, and so long a quiet ensued, that the watchers thought his spirit had departed; a returning sigh proved not, then another, and another still, each weaker than the last, until the smiles of death were indeed playing upon his features, token of the spirit's flight to longed-for scenes and spheres.

Tom, to whom Mabel had telegraphed in her first shock of fear, arrived quietly, and entered the room of his early friend, just as he cast his mantle off, of fleshly shape, nearing the early hours of day.

Mr. Osgood, already grief-stricken, found on returning home, that his daughter lay hovering between two worlds, and no mortal could answer which way the scales would weigh the heaviest.

Silence, oppressive, reigned in that room, holding in check the beating waves of strong loves in deepest sorrow, whose muffled surging made no sound outside the encasing breasts.

No sound? None but the occasional wail of the tender infant which came into the world wrapped in its garment of flesh, through struggle and suffering, within the same hour that another spirit had so willingly laid it by, for a birth into other spheres as untried, new, and full of wonderment, as this sphere to the babe just born; each in their appropriate line of progress through the march of years, take up the web of life to thread the pathways stamped upon the recesses of soul, by the finger of the great designer—God.

How subtle the golden threads of magnetic life that hold and keep their sway between the hearts of mother and child. That the tiny wail of the feeblest infant should speak with the appealing of a thousand tongues, to recall the life that had almost sped away, to its casket once more, and weigh down the scale for life and consciousness.

Thus, gentle May returned to life's expression, and the enticements of motherhood, while the muffled throbs of watching hearts beat more wildly still, as through their depths of love, only the gentlest expression of a receding wave, was permitted to fall on the ears of the wife and daughter, in loving and caressing tones.

CHAPTER XXII.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES—PROPITIOUS OMEN.

They “lifted up their voices and wept” was almost literally true of the villagers of Homer, when it became known that their long-tried townsman, friend and leader, had passed beyond their ken. Tears flowed freely from the eyes of even stalwart men, on hearing the story of Mr. Tremaine’s last hours, and many gave utterance to the wish that they had done more to show their appreciation of him, while he lived.

Thus always unerringly, the soul stings us, when a truly loved object has passed beyond our reach, into a remembrance of things left undone, that our impulses had often prompted us to do. As one man, the villagers arose to unite their efforts to pay one grand tribute to the memory of Mr. Tremaine, the last and only privilege left to them now. The desire to look upon the face of the dead was so universal, that Mabel was constrained, through Mr. Osgood’s advice, to allow her uncle’s remains to be carried to the chapel, where so often his thoughts and prayers had mingled with others in a grand unity of aspiration and praise to God, the inspirer of all. During the whole of one day, and until the funeral hour of the

next, there was to be seen a steady stream of humanity, coming and going from out the presence of their dead, for they claimed him such, in ownership of love and interest.

Imagination must picture the offerings and decorations of flowers, plucked, as from the hearts of the people, to accompany this good man to the grave—for which he had no dread. The hour at length arrived for the simple ceremony, requested by Mr. Tremaine sometime before his death, and in compliance with which, Mr. Osgood addressed the people in the language of the farewell words left by his friend, expressing his great desire, not only for simplicity of burial, but that such services be conducted as though it were a moment of rejoicing and happiness, and not of grief and sadness. That he be not looked upon as dead, and buried within the tomb to remain in its darkened dampness, but to think of his transition hence, as but the change of the embryo, to a more perfect form and freer life, of the newly born. Then the choir sang his favorite “Beautiful Life,” followed by an invocation from the lips of the aged pastor, to whom Mr. Tremaine was much attached.

The most intimate friends were pall-bearers, headed by Mr. Osgood and Tom, whom Mabel desired should fill that office, though it left her alone. As the funeral train slowly moved along the streets of Homer, tokens of love and respect were shown by the closed windows of store and house; and where the occupants were unable to present themselves among the follow-

ers to the grave, they stepped forth with bared heads and bowed, until the funeral cortege had passed. The country grave-yard reached, the prettiest and most cheerful spot was in readiness to receive the mortal form of him who had beautified it with his own hand, had literally prepared a place, not for his soul truly, but for his body's last rest.

The most trying of all moments to the family of deceased friends, came equally to Mr. Tremaine's, as the hollow sound of the clods of clay, fell after each other above the breast of his fondly loved tenement; then Mabel's heart failed her, which had so long time restrained itself from outward manifestation, and with a deep moan she sank by her husband's side in unconsciousness.

Sympathy and feeling were becoming expressive, when suddenly the attention of those nearest the grave, was attracted by the gyrations of a snow-white dove above the open tomb beneath, now fluttering down for a moment above the lowered coffin, then as if in affright, rising again, again to settle for an instant within the tomb. Those who were wielding the spade and shovel, trembled at the bird's peculiar motions, with superstitious dread. The interest and silence of its witnesses, burst forth into a gentle murmur, as with one quick swoop the dove planted itself on Mabel's bosom, just as consciousness was regaining its sway.

As token sent from another land, she held it closely clasped, while it cooed in her brooding arms, an omen portentous, the simple folks held.

The last rite accomplished, the aged pastor lifted up his hands and said, "In the name of our late friend I feel constrained to bless you all, and let us rejoice indeed, that his new-born spirit is at last in the enjoyment of those realms to which it so often soared with desire, when on this mortal plane. God and His good angels bless, and be with us all. Amen."

CHAPTER XXIII.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF UNCLE TREMAINE.

Of necessity, some days passed after the funeral before any business matters, as set forth in Mr. Tremaine's will, and his verbal requests, could be attended to. Mr. Osgood was as prompt as possible however, and presented himself to Tom and Mabel early one morning. In handing his sealed will to Mr. Osgood, Mr. Tremaine said that he had made him his executor, and asked if he gave his voluntary consent beside, on receiving which, the good man seemed much pleased, and saying he should feel then that all would be well, dismissed the subject entirely, nor again alluded to it, until upon his dying bed.

The seal being broken the paper read thus:

“I, C. L. Tremaine declare this to be my last will and testament, written and signed this — day of June, 18—.

“First, I will state that my worldly goods are not so great as to give me any uneasiness in passing them into the hands of those I know and love so well, and who I feel will interpret my motive in this last act, through a knowledge of my peculiarities of thought and belief, generously not only, but heartily accept it.

“Secondly, I make a statement as follows:

“I own the homestead and grounds without encum-

brance, and it is insured for a year to come. Also, a small farm of twenty acres just outside of Homer; the deeds and papers relating to them both will be found in my desk, severally marked and labelled.

“In money, thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) in bank, to which I became the heir in my younger days. On the interest of this sum, with the proceeds of occasional labor, I have lived comfortably and had a surplus for any other purpose I desired.

“My life is insured for fifty-thousand dollars more.

“The foregoing covers the amount of my worldly possessions, and which I now proceed to dispose of according to my desires, entitled:

MY WILL.

“First, The Homestead, I give with my tenderest love, and in the full memory of earlier days, to “Our Mabel,” with whom every nook and corner has its association, to be hers fully, to hold or to dispose of, as she desires, save the portion allotted to, “Auntie Bet,” and which is divided from the main lot by a fence; a deed for this portion is already drawn and signed by me, also to be found in private desk.

“Second, The interest on the thirty thousand dollars in bank, I desire Mabel to have for life, save such sum to be paid by her to “Auntie Bet” quarterly, as would be the amount of her wages were she still in my employ.

“Third, The amount from which the income is derived, I wish to remain intact, but give this privilege to Mabel and her husband, to withdraw and re-invest, if thought at any time to be best, always provided it be safely done, and not used in a manner the least degree speculative.

“After Mabel, the interest money is to fall to the children she may leave, and be divided equally among

them without regard to age or sex; the father keeping in trust the same, or properly expending for their benefit, until the youngest shall reach the age of majority, when the capital amount shall be thus equally divided.

“I also request, that for this purpose, Mabel and her husband shall at once make such arrangement and provision as shall best secure this end, in case of the death of either, or both.

“Fourth, The twenty acres of land and life insurance of \$50,000, I place in trust in the hands of my friend George Osgood, of this place, and my nephew Tom Joiner, as a nucleus for a fund which I hope will be raised for the establishment of a seminary, and a connecting library open to both sexes; the library to be circulating, as a means to a partial support of itself.

“And lastly, when either of the above named shall be taken away by death, the survivors shall select another person in his place, according to his best judgment as to efficiency and integrity, and in like manner to proceed, as one or another passes away.

“With love and sincere regard, I leave this my last will and testament in the hands of my friend Mr. Osgood, with that perfect trust which “casteth out fear” and so sign myself, and hereunto affix my seal this — day June, 18—.

CHARLES L. TREMAINE.”

The papers relating to Mr. Tremaine’s property were found in his desk as by direction, and all concerned or interested in its distribution, expressed their approbation of his design and appropriation.

The school project was not new to Mr. Osgood, with whom Mr. Tremaine had often canvassed the subject, so that he was well versed in his friend’s ideas and desires regarding it.

“Auntie Bet” wept for thankfulness when told how well Mr. Tremaine had provided for her old age, and she insisted that henceforth she would devote her services to “Miss Mabel” in caring for, and keeping up the homestead during Mabel’s absence each year.

Autumn was advancing, and Tom who must needs be at his work, was compelled to hasten away, but Mabel remained to put away her uncle’s personal effects, and many of their household goods.

Jennie, her husband and family, had returned to their city home, having waited to know that the sister May was out of danger, and a speedy convalescence assured; returned with the solemnities of life more deeply impressed upon her now receptive spirit, and with a consciousness of loss, not yet measureable, but with the foresight of intuition, she knew that future hours and days would bring a revealment of the extent of a loss, now only bounded by a sudden departure, and sorrow therefor. She entered her beautiful home awakened to the nearness of death to every loved one, giving rise to new thoughts within her breast, concerning the death of life, and the life of death.

Meanwhile it had been forbidden to speak of Mr. Tremaine’s death in the sick room, and May remained unconscious of all that had transpired concerning him, until by repeated questions, breathed from the dim prescience of her sensitive soul, she claimed the truth at last.

Although grieved, and full of sorrow, with knowledge of the facts, the philosophy of self sustenance

in affliction or trials, through recognition of life's controlling laws, (ideas which May had almost unconsciously imbibed from her early acquaintance with Mr. Tremaine) enabled her to hold that balance due to nature, in refraining from such physical shock, as to greatly impede her progress healthward.

Though fleetness was harnessed to the chariot of time in which Dr. Carleton had tenderly removed his wife to his home, "Our Mabel" still lingered in the home of her youth. It was not a hasty packing up of treasured things, for memory would recall, and repeat its story, with a seeming individuality of every article she touched; and she must listen, and live it all over again, a pleasure and a pain.

Mabel had purposely left her uncle's desk until the last, feeling sure there would be much to interest her in it, and she would fain give herself up to its full enjoyment without other care upon her mind. She was not doomed to disappointment, for she indeed found much, that to her was a great treasure, more especially Mr. Tremaine's journals, which would give all the more pleasure that he had given his consent to their perusal, in a note found in one of them, in which he said, "My dear Mabel, these private journals were never intended for the perusal of any mortal but myself, as a reminder of the different stages of my thought and perception, but in view of that change I feel is close at hand, which will take me from your present vision, sensations arise from the depths of affection for the precious child of my adoption, that

make me unwilling to go hence and leave nothing behind to speak my thought to her, as in the years gone by, when she was growing from babyhood to girlhood, and girlhood to womanhood; therefore Mabel, these pages that have so narrowly escaped the flames, I leave for you, they record many an hour of weakness; many a conflict of soul, and multitudinous thoughts in perception of the height, depth, length and breadth of *Life*, as vouchsafed to humanity, in its myriad conditions and forms."

" It has taken a life time here, to settle upon a philosophy which embraces them all as just and right, in the sense of fulfillment of Divine and immutable laws, and to feel akin to all conditions of life, through a charity impressed upon the soul; and which recognizes the stamps of Divinity, that are somewhere to be found in every grade of being. Through deepest love for *life* in its every expression, because recognized as parts, or scintillations from the source, the great Cause of life, comes a charity which can lift the cloaks of condition, and discover the 'pearl of great price,' a spark at least, of the Godhood underlying all, and which we may be sure will so assert itself in time, as to burst from out the clouds of human type, and rise to such expression as becomes its source and giver—God."

The desk gone through, Mabel locked and withdrew its key, taking nothing therefrom but the books her uncle had thus bequeathed to her. Her first impulse was to peruse them at once, but she wisely concluded

to wait until she reached her home, where she could do so more leisurely, and with more satisfaction.

It was a sad and lonely leavetaking for Mabel, from Homer, the stage whereupon so much of her life's drama had been enacted, and it seemed now as though the book of pleasure had been closed to her, that the fountain of her inspiration had become dry, and the ground upon which it played, parched and lifeless.

Not true dear Mabel! So seemeth it now, but the fountain's supply is being renewed from the great source fountain of all, and soon again shall you hear the silvery showers of the waters of life, flowing from little fountains here and there who have drawn from the fountain that has passed from your eyes; with these will come the "Comforter," opening your sight to God's beneficence in all these things which for a time so hurt and try our mortal senses.

How else can the spiritual body grow to its best proportions, save through the sorrowful hurtings of physical being, which quicken the heart's impulses for safety and protection, and sendeth them to the spirit's citadel, within whose sacred crypts are revealed life's causes, and the spirit's hope?

With the power gained through this withdrawal from the outward man, to that within, the spirit can gird up its loins and defy the world to inflict its myriad stripes, and torture to the last extent, its physical —covering, for the great "I am," living within it can not be destroyed, or enslaved its eternal life.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SEQUEL OF A GOOD MAN'S EARTH-LIFE.

Mr. and Mrs. Osgood were lonely, indeed, when all the home-comers had taken their departure, whose coming and presence, and their going, together with the death of Mr. Tremaine, had both gladdened and saddened their true hearts with a whole volume of life, that seemed to them to have been enacted on their threshold.

Producing still deeper thought within them, giving new directions to its working, and filling up the hours so dreaded for the absence of the loved ones, with so many new and varied sensations, that the days flew, they knew not where.

Another family meeting was planned for the next summer, if all went well with each little family; meanwhile, correspondence assumed more of life and mutual interest than ever before, and sweetened greatly many cups.

May and Mabel resumed their old intimacy during the summer just passed, and had spent many pleasant hours together, though fewer than had been anticipated, owing to Mr. Tremaine's failing health. Letters passed freely now between these early sworn friends; an interchange, at once interesting and profitable, as

May gave expression to her motherhood delights, hopes and desires, and her own ambition for culture and growth of soul, for her "sweet baby's sake"; and Mabel's answers full of a lively interest, answering much in her own way and thought, and sometimes quoting the words remembered to have fallen from her uncle's lips, and again from those "jewels" in her possession.

May became so much interested in the latter, that she besought of Mabel some such extracts as were not of too private a nature, and that she was willing to give, pleading that she, too, was to a certain degree, a pupil of Mr. Tremaine's, and would fully appreciate the gift.

Mabel, ever anxious for others to enjoy what she did in any interest, and believing that her uncle would not object to the plan, if he could answer the spirit of its questioning, consented.

And so it followed, that during the winter, as one and another thought from out the written passage of her uncle's years appealed to Mabel, as suitable for transcription for her friend's use, she made copy until quite a little volume was the result.

Mabel sent these transcripts in her frequent letters, which both Dr. Carleton and his wife had come to look forward to as a stated pleasure, and felt disappointment when, by any mail's delay, the letter came not.

Among the first of these, the following extracts were enclosed, written, according to date, some of them many years before Mr. Tremaine's death.

“What a strange and varied existence one life can experience, and the larger spiritual perceptions one attains to in progress through life, the more, seemingly, is one compelled to actualize in his or her own individuality; on the principle, as I suppose, that knowledge of any kind is not truly ours until we have made it, or earned it, through an appropriate experience to that end.

“Thus, the more we would learn or know, the more varied our experience must be, and do we count the cost, when in our aspirations of prayer, we seek to comprehend and fathom the mysteries of our being and life, of God’s creations and laws, through cause and effect? Nay, nay; we ask and cry out earnestly for light, *light*; the cry is heard, and fulfilling the word ‘ask and ye shall receive,’ straightway begins a train of experiences, leading us down full low and often, that by searching through the earthiness of mortality, in contact with souls who become our teachers, though unstamped are their brows with the mark of our soul’s delight, congeniality, sympathy, attraction.

“By conception, through gestation, unto travail in fulfillment of time, are our children born of the fleshly shape, and biding it seems by a kindred law, must all the wisdom or knowledge children, be gradually brought into actual life, throughceptive conditions and after-growth, to and through a realizing sense of the cause up to the effect, or knowledge sought.

“And yet, though the cost be great labor, pain and mental anguish, who would shrink to pass the ordeal, when another child of knowledge is to become our possession; ours’s of a surety, which no man may claim away from us, and bringing its consequent great joy of another question, another problem, solved, ready to begin another, and then another still.

“And revealment, is it not ever ours, when growth of

heart and growth of mind conjoin in search of nature's plan, and shall we not find that *mystery* is but another name for laws misunderstood, or unrecognized? Thus it appears to the shortened vision of my innermost thought, and so I feel impelled to study life in its multitudinous forms, within this view of the Creator and His creations, and may God give admittance to my knocking, and seeking, and asking, that it may be opened, that I shall find and then receive some clew to the harmonies of life, as issuing from Himself, the maker."

* * * * *

"Strive to enter at the straight gate, for narrow is the way and straight the gate that leads to life eternal, but broad is the way that leadeth down to destruction."

A THOUGHT.

"Narrow, and guarded by outposts and sentinels, at every turn from the road which righteousness has appointed for man to walk within. If the sentries are weak, or sleeping at their posts, presenting not their arms at the proper time, then will the soul turn oftentimes aside, to retrace with bitterness, and sorrow, and wearied feet, the steps which took it astray; but if watchful, every sentinel will sternly 'present arms' and forbid the deviation into avenues which the traveller continually encounters of impatience, faithlessness, suspicion, anger, hatred, conceit, selfishness, unkind judgments, censoriousness, deceit, and many other tempting pathways for human souls."

OUR MABEL TO MAY CARLETON.

"DEAR MAY:—

"These extracts from uncle's book speak for themselves, do they not? and give us an insight to the

principles and motives upon which he strove to base his life and actions, and how well did they serve him in his humanitarian life and influence; bringing him into closer rapport with the hearts and lives and motives of the human beings by whom he was surrounded or brought into contact.

“How many to-day are blessing his name, and are thankful that he has lived. Oh! May, how I do wish I might honor his dear life with its high purpose, by promulgating and living purely by the principles he instilled by his own example.

“How comes it that we so constantly switch off from the plainly marked pathway before us, which earnest desire has paved and pointed to as the right way, though the ‘narrow way.’

“That right in the face of our settled purpose, fresh and present within our hearts, we yet speak some word, do some action, look some look, diametrically opposite in its effect, from what we most long to express, or in some silence where no word will come to our assistance, let that pass which we feel ought to be made use of.

“This is a problem to me, for all these things cover up one’s true and earnest intention, and make us apparently guilty of other thoughts and meanings, unless the strength of desire and feeling impresses itself above and beyond the exclamation points, or the silence of a purely circumstantial evidence.

“I sometimes think this may be so. I hope it is, and that these expressions, and the failure of those

we wish to voice, are but the flashings of some revealment of nature, and truths which are glimpsed to us as fresh food for thought, a new aspect of life's unfoldment as connected with varying individualities, perhaps as a return for, or answer to the thought or words we send out.

"If our true intentions and desires for our fellow beings miscarry, through our imperfections, may we not hope that the thought and intention of love is recognized by God and passed to our credit, even while He may smile at the infantile efforts of His, as yet, untutored children?

"Well, May, we will strive for the best things in our hearts and lives, won't we! However far we fall short of a perfect expression, trusting the future to enlarge our understanding and imbue us with more of that wisdom, which is love.

Yours, as ever,
MABEL."

Extract:—

"March 15, 18—.

"Written under impatience of some delay.

"The way for a day seems cloudy, but only, I suppose, because my waiting, anxious spirit ill brooks the necessary delay, for it must be at work, and compelled passivity from inaction, wearies as the efforts of a caged bird to escape confinement; this in face of my reasoning, which tells me that these moments are fraught with lessons as much needed as any others.

"This halting; may it not cause the mind to look deeper still into causes and forward to their results, to analyze the soul's proclivities with its powers and aims?

“But the soul, does it cease to expand and perceive when it must, as it were, stand still? Or, is it but preparing for a flight to another branch on life’s great tree, there again to halt, to look about, and prepare for a flitting to another just beyond?”

“So I suppose that no work, no waiting, is lost to the soul, but that it drinks from every fount, culls from every flower, and bathes in every sunbeam, nor is ever lost beneath earth’s deepest clouds, whose faith can catch a glimpse of the “silver linings” that shine out cheerily upon a sobbing world of blinded hearts, whose inherent powers, through ignorance and false conditions to their development, are all but swept away by the seeming ills of cloud and storm.

“No, I must believe that these quiet places, of seeming inactivity, are but the resting places where the soul digests not only the experiences of its past, but is girding up its loins for the next step forward, when with renewed vigor and vitality, it resumes its onward path of life.”

* * * * *

Again—

“June 3, 18—

“Flowing from the eternal source, through avenues of countless number, comes the divine idea and will, to waiting, pleading souls, whose brows upturned, send out their cry for light, more light, that they may bask in its cheering and life-giving influence, and their eyes be made to see and comprehend the mysteries of existence.

“Mystery when viewed as a whole, and by partial eyes, but viewed by God and learned of by man, as to secret causes, and of their unfailing results, no mystery lies concealed in Nature’s lap.

“To the blinding ignorance of man alone, secret, hidden, for she seeks not to conceal but to reveal, and woos

in every possible manner, man to stop and consider, to look deeper and longer, that he may understand the simplicity of her ways and means, and note the beautiful flowering results of everlasting causes.

“Causes which man may reap a knowledge of, if he will, and trace to their legitimate results as certainly as to the sum of any mathematical problem, which in numerical science is obtained.

“But these things, this knowledge of Nature’s secrets and design, though not intended to be secreted from the mankind who seek, and work to obtain her instructions, comes only to those who *love her* well, and all the children of her bosom who claim a kinship to all the creations to which she has given birth.

Then gladly does she point the way to every intricate path, and show the foot-prints so beautifully pressed, and kept by the divinities of life, beneath the overhanging shadows of the weeds along their way, which have overlooked the angel footprints, and soared to overlap and clasp their hands above them, all unconscious of the lowly tracks beneath, that send out no call to any but the humble followers who search in nature’s by-ways, for the simple and direct leadings to her unbosoming gifts and love.”

* * * * *

And again,—

“They wish for the ‘innocence of a child,’ but no, give me rather that innocence which is born of knowledge, than the innocence of a child through its ignorance.”

Again—

“Such a problem is life! and there appears to be no solution, when, as often and over again we seem to have attained its sum, some fraction looms up to spoil the result, compelling us to begin anew.”

* * * * *

Another,—

“I have been thinking of the story of the life of Jesus, very much of late, and as I think, it takes on a new meaning in its application to individuals.

“I picture Him, though in a lowly garb, a very Prince in mien, as He walks the earth with a tread, gentle as firm; as if the very ground beneath His feet had a claim upon His heart for kindly treatment.

“And how they of likewise lowly life were attracted to Him, and felt like worshiping, as He expressed the divinity within Him in familiar words and similes, so free from selfish word or thought; they who could appreciate, because not puffed up with the vanities of riches, or position, who had no hope or prospect for such, and therefore free from the ambition and labor to attain them, but free also to drink from the fount of His inspiration, and become themselves inspired, and imbued with the teachings of love, He Himself received from His Father above.

“I see Him in the sorrow of His sensitive heart, and His followers in their surprise and wonderment at the accusations of those in power, that they have not perceived, and accepted the truths their Jesus taught as most divine.

“And the temptation to some of His weaker followers to half turn back when unpopularity became too searching.

“All this, and more, does the picture set forth, but the one idea that seems to predominate in my meditation, is the thought that only those who had learned to love well the *man*, as well as His teachings, clung to Him in His hour of trial, wept and deeply mourned when He was taken from their sight, never again to mingle in family circles, a sympathizer in affliction and trouble, and as a teacher of their deep significance.

“Hearts that clung to Him as to a brother dearly loved, as parent, lover and intimate friend; for must we not suppose that those whose lives daily crossed His own, gave unto Him the best they had to give, from the child’s little heart of love, as to a parent; of brothers and sisters as to a favorite brother, and some maiden hearts their ideal trust?

“Thus Jesus’ trials and latest sufferings, came home to each with appalling force, and continued to impress their lives, as memory kept them fresh with her backward pointing finger to some remembered word or act, some tone or touch, subduing their worldly thoughts and affections, and sending inward their meditations, to resolve upon a higher life, to such as He had pointed and lived the way, with an intuitional hope, and trust, and belief, that in the Great Beyond somewhere, wrongs would be righted, and sorrow glorified into a transfiguration of an eternal crown of happiness, whose jewels should be Rest, Peace, Harmony, Love, and everlasting unity of loved ones.

“Those who knew Him well in the form of man, thus loved and grieved, and remembered with an unction that led to purer living. Those who to-day are of gentle heart and loving mind, with the strength of a divine fervor, can read and re-read the story of their Jesus, and so personify Him to their thought and affection, as to have the same beautiful effect on their daily lives, as result of His pure and heavenly teachings.

“But comparatively few have ever heard the story of His life, and fewer still are those who *sit* “at the feet of Jesus” to learn of Him, and have received the Comforter since He became their Saviour.

“Those who have not heard, and they who do not heed the voice of a Christ, it seems to me, must have

a Saviour somewhere, in some way, and that he comes straight from the bosom of God's unending love, to save the souls that else would not know of Him.

"Thus the early grief that comes to some maiden heart, when the idol of her young womanhood has been snatched from her arms; when the first born, just blooming into smiles of a sweet recognition, sleeps to wake no more to human sight. When the daily companion of a life in whom all trust and deepest love reposed, is called to 'go hence,' leaving but the cold ashes of despair on the hearthstone of the once cheerful and unbroken home.

"Or, worse still, the forced contemplation of agonies and tortures of some loved mortal, as he is broken and bent, beaten and bruised, by the evil spirits that have entered into him, and who will not be gone until every passion becomes satiated, and the weakness of death is upon their victim.

"These, these are the saviours of great numbers of mankind, over whose tombs we take our steps heavenward, through the memories of tone, touch, and speech, of the sufferings, and often untold sorrows that went out with them into an eternity that our human hands strive vainly to reach, and our human eyes, blinded by seeking their vision through the veil that has fallen.

"Then it is, that instinctively the soul retreats to its inner sanctuary, to communicate its sorrow as to a friend that might dwell there; in time there comes from the most interior shrine of this sanctuary the words of a sibyl ('the still small voice') who has chosen this solitary abode from whence to plead with heaven for knowledge, to impart as answer to the human prayer, a prophetess that never errs, for her solitude from the haunts of men, keeps her vision clear, and speech unclouded.

“ Dear Sibyl of my heart,
 Lead thou my struggling soul,
 Nor let the ways of art
 Delay me from the goal,
 Neither by discontent
 Or clogging earthly ways,
 Whose breath must e'er betray
 Into temptations dire,
 The soul that tastes desire.

But ever let me be
 Uncovered to your gaze,
 That list'ning unto thee,
 For thy ‘small voice’ and true,
 My soul be e'er intent,
 As from a prophet sent,
 To grasp new truth and old,
 And come within the fold
 Of God, through thy voice lent.”

The foregoing are some of the extracts that Mabel sent to May Carleton, from out Mr. Tremaine’s journals, yet much there was that she could not pen for even the eyes of the gentle May, and which to herself was a new revelation of the abiding sorrow of her uncle’s days, and of his fierce struggle to keep before him in active principle, the true motive of his life, when pains weakened, sensibilities were stung, and misunderstandings lashed him into strong temptation to withhold himself from knowledge of the wrongs of the world about him, to suffer less in consequence, and give up the unequal strife, in desire to right them.

The passages of self-rebuke, and those of self-encouragement, were strong in their censure and appeal

Thus, in secret communion of soul, did the good

man gird up his loins for the daily battle of life, to attack and hold the fort of Duty, against the odds of pressure from the foe without.

And so we must leave him, his life, his works, and these words he left behind. to fall as good seeds upon the ground he tended with love, and watered with tears, or as unfruitful, because unsuited to the soil he tilled.

He was not allowed to gather in the sheaves, to measure the grain, or to know for what his labor had been expended; all that he could realize, was the heat and sweat of his toil, the weariness of fatigue, and languishment of unfulfilled desire. The day was spent, the sun gone down when no man can work, and he must be gathered to his fathers. Commending himself to the watchful care of his heavenly Father, until the night of death be overpast, and resting his weary head upon His Almighty bosom, he falls asleep to awaken upon a more beautiful day, to find rest in labor, requitings to love, and a divine peace and harmony in all the voices of the Universe, whose discords apparent, are more heard on earth, because its mortals have ears as yet unattuned to the orchestral harmony of God's myriad worlds, while they carry the minor scales of life.

Can we not, almost, lift the veil behind which so earnest and true a soul has vanished, and see the bright aura that his grand aspirations, and love almost divine, has wrought for his brow, and behold the ineffable glory that beams from his countenance, as his soul

drinks in the wonderful comprehension and exceeding beauty of the eternal law, and order, sustained by the everlasting cause and POWER, GOD?

We see that peace is setting to his soul like a dove, and being clothed upon with a perfect trust, makes ready for the new experiences which await him in the avenues now opening, that his spirit hath so longed to tread.

Rejoicings only can we send out after him, though he is passing farther from our gaze, for we know what joy in life must be opening up to him, who so thirsted for truth, and hungered for knowledge.

CHAPTER XXV.

FAREWELL TO OUR FRIENDS.

None so missed Mr. Tremaine in Homer, as Mr. Osgood, to whom he had been not only a friend, but an adviser and co-worker in many things pertaining to private and public interests; now he must walk alone amid his cares, which grew and increased upon him, yet he secretly clad himself in the armor of a determination to follow, as closely as possible, the footsteps of his friend, and hoped to carry out to fruition Mr. Tremaine's plans for the people for which he had so generously provided.

A new life had been creeping upon this aging couple—the Osgoods—through the fears, hopes and tears of the passing years. The husband found in his wife the comfort and solace so necessary to him now, and Mrs. Osgood, whose spirit had assumed its native quietness, since the “skeleton of their closet” had walked forth and clothed itself with the habiliments of flesh and blood, found a pleasure, deeper than ever before, in the untiring love and implicit trust of her husband, making at times, her gift of intuition almost prophetic in his interest. Hand in hand they now go down the hillside of life, and the way seems less difficult, and with fewer obstructions, while it appears to grow much shorter.

Many an hour of the evening twilight they spend in contemplation of the rest which is waiting for them in the valley below, where runs the crystal river on whose bosom they will set sail and cross to the farther shore, to take possession of the home there prepared,—their “mansion not built by hands” or fashioned by architect, but with the substance of their shadows, the real of their ideal, the actual matter of their thoughts, prayers and desires, out of which God Himself doth fashion it.

* * * * *

Transformed is the city palace of Jennie in its inward part; externally it is the same, and none but the spiritual eye could penetrate the walls to know the mighty change within.

To see the pale, saddened, almost lifeless and aimless woman of two years ago, now in rosy health, the laughing happy mother, the loved and idolizing wife, and cheery mistress of the serving household. To witness the romping gaieties of the children with their occasional bursts of loving tenderness, as they run to mamma for the frequent kiss, or to obey her slightest call.

The beautiful meeting of papa, and struggle for the first embrace, as he enters his home after the business of the day, and the tender tones of welcome from “my bright-eyed Jennie.”

And above all, the delightful evenings at home, where the father and husband chooses to stay, in the face of enticing persuasions without, and revel in this heaven of his own.

How sweet the music Jennie makes, how lovely the flowers her hand has so tastefully arranged, how cheerful the parlors, aglow with warmth and light, and how thoroughly comfortable the easy-chair the loving thought of the wife had ordered hither for his use.

As a *dream*, delicious, as a reality, it is heavenly.

* * * * *

Mabel's life problem is not yet solved, nor will it be, until the hand of death closes the door behind her.

We find her still at work grappling with ideas, and seeking solutions which her soul feels are in existence, and at her command, when she may have found the key.

She drinks deeply of home joys, and were self alone considered, would gladly consecrate herself solely to them, but something within the shrine of her being compels to a constant study of human life in its every phase, so far as she can compass it, keeping her always in position of strong desire to aid or strengthen, soothe or guide the helpless or weak, the suffering or misguided, who come within her reach.

The comfort and happiness of her husband and children are ever her first consideration and duty, as also her greatest pleasure, yet she finds time to supply in a measure, the hunger and thirst of many souls engaged in the fierce battle of life, living in "tents of unrest," and uncertain movement, with no cheery home to entice, or loving arms to embrace them, with but the dreary and barren earth about, so far as sup-

plying their needs are concerned, and the cold though starry sky above them, too distant it seems, to note by any quiver, the sorrows and blightings of earth.

But this seemingness should be swept away, when such as "Our Mabel" are impressed from the skies beyond, to take up the mission of peace and good will, of help and encouragement, and to become indeed, one of God's ministering spirits to those of the "earth earthy" who else would never lift their eyes above, and out beyond the present strife and scenes of human life.

We cannot follow Mabel in her faithful motherhood to the children growing up about her, but we may be sure that her teachings and example will be, as now, of the most exalted kind; and Tom, her husband, will grow no less desirous to set before his children a true example, than when in their infant days he so felt the new responsibility that God had placed upon him. He will confer with the wife he so tenderly loves, and together they will work for the truest needs of their offspring, while they seek that strength which never fails, and that wisdom which is promised to the seeker.

When two hearts, united and blended into one through every interest and claim of love, thus near the throne above in perfect faith, that for the asking, they shall receive both strength and light for the duties of each passing day, shall we not, nay, *must* we not believe, that the promise is not forgotten of Heaven, whose son proclaimed that where two or

three are gathered together, with the same desire, asking "whatsoever they will, it shall be given unto them."

To the integrity of their loving hearts we leave them then "Our Mabel" and Tom Joiner, now no longer "odd," to fulfil the purpose of their lives, with no fear for their success, so far as in them lies, for they trust in God, and will learn of him through the myriad ways of life.

* * * * *

Meanwhile Dr. Carleton makes his daily rounds among the patients who have committed themselves to his care, while they have learned to love and listen for the sound of his coming footsteps, as though they brought a surety to their hope, of health or longer lease of life.

And a tender care he gives to his dependent charges, as he strives to minister to the sometimes sicker minds than bodies, which only by way of sympathy, give warnings of the deeper pains of mind and heart.

And May, did she linger always at home to fondle and teach the little child of her absorbing love? Nay, her love made her feel more keenly for the little ones who lay dying, or forsaken by hope, or suffering tortures resultant from some life's mistake, bearing the cross in infancy, for other's sins; and realize the agony wrung from mother hearts, whose bosoms feel no more the clinging, petting fingers of baby hands, whose arms and laps are empty of the little forms who claimed their protection and caressing ease.

With love's gentleness and sympathy, May glides in and out among such suffering ones, comforting as best she can each aching heart, to return to her own home nest, and its cooing dove, with redoubled zeal for its well-being in every sense, and a broader comprehension of what her duties are, conning thus her daily page, in the history of life. That the earth is not barren of truth-seeking, earnest souls, who aim to do their best in life and action, while striving to comprehend the grand lesson of *Charity*, taught by Jesus, which in the daily revealments of individual life is ever new, and freshly applicable, let us dear reader be gladly thankful.

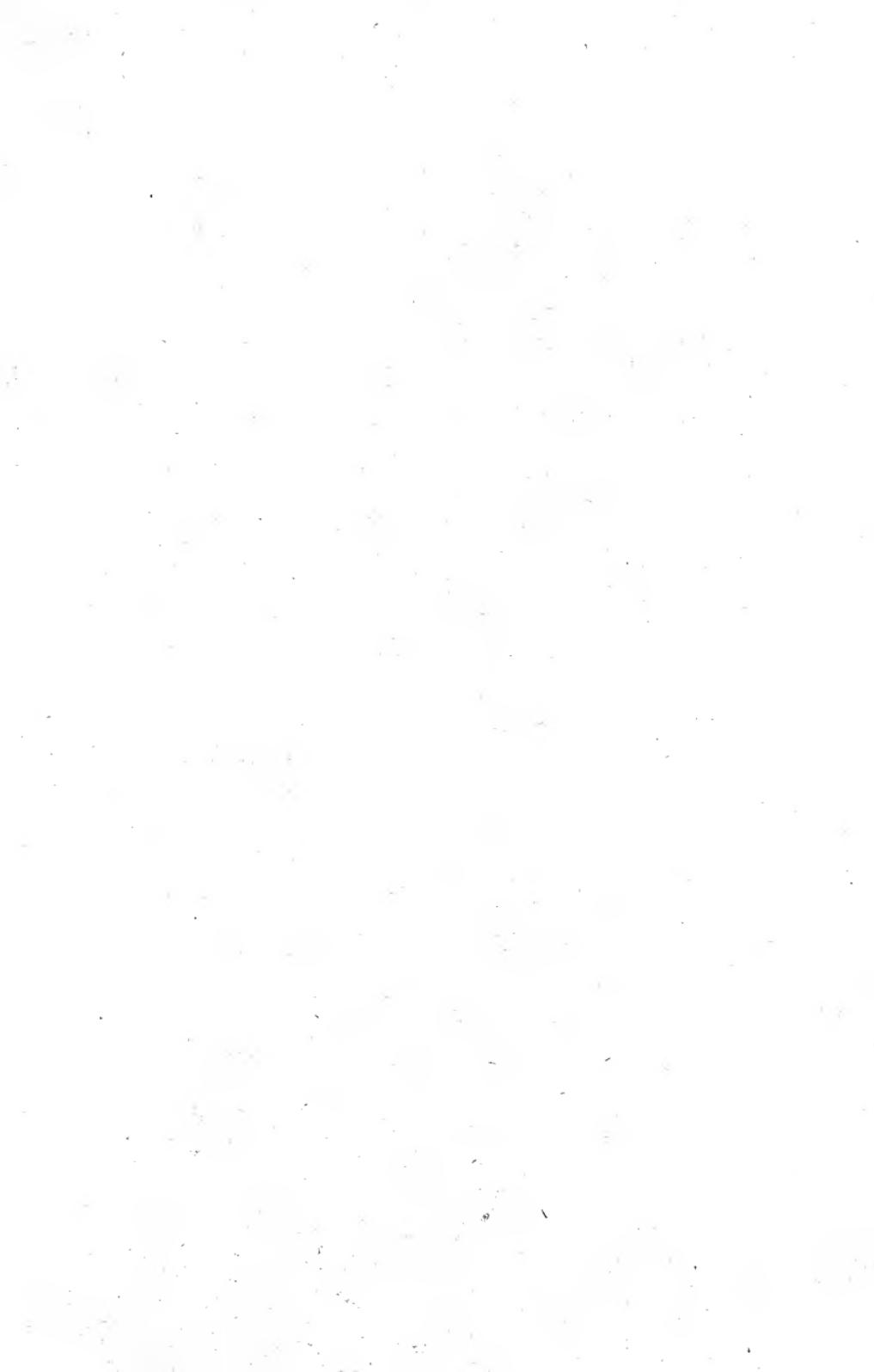
“God of the granite and the rose!
Soul of the sparrow and the bee!

The mighty tide of being flows
Through countless charnels, Lord from Thee.

It leaps to life in grass and flowers,
Through every grade of being runs,
Till from Creation's radiant towers
Its glory flames in stars and suns.”

“The mighty tide of Being flows
Through all thy creatures back to Thee,
Thus round and round the circle runs—
A mighty sea without a shore—
While men and angels, stars and suns,
Unite to praise Thee evermore!”







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